

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

FON Chron

VZCZCTGI *
RR RUEHC RUEHGT RUEHSJ RUEHSN RUEHUB RUEKJCS
RUFKJCS RUEOEHA
DE RUEHTG #1692/01 038 **
ZNY SSSSS/BBBBB ZZH
R 070246Z FEB 85
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC / SECSTATE WASHDC 8840
INFO RUEHGT / AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 2354
RUEHSJ / AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 9740
RUEHSN / AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0877
RUEHUB / USINT HAVANA 0221
RUEKJCS / SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS / JCS WASHDC
RUEOEHA / USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
BT
~~SECRET TEGUCIGALPA 01692~~

X X (G)
R

CLASS: ~~SECRET~~
CHRG: PROG 2/6/85
APPRV: AMB: JDNEGROPONTE
DRFTD: DCM: SCLOWMAN:AK
CLEAR: NONE
DISTR: DCM AMB POL

DECAPTION

~~SECRET~~ **DECAPTIONED**

MILITARY ADDRESSEES TREAT AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, MARR, XK, HO

SUBJECT: ~~PROSPECTS FOR US/HONDURAN BILATERAL TALKS~~

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT
2. SUMMARY: BILATERAL SECURITY TALKS LAST WEEK WERE POSITIVE. PROGRESS HAS BEEN REGISTERED TOWARD A FORM FOR SECURITY ASSURANCES MORE ACCEPTABLE TO HONDURAS AND AN AGREEMENT ON A PERMANENT RMTC. BUT NEITHER OF THESE QUESTIONS NOR OTHER SECURITY ISSUES (I.E., FUTURE JOINT EXERCISE SCHEDULES) HAS BEEN ENTIRELY RESOLVED, AND THE HONDURANS MAY YET DECIDE TO HOLD FINAL DECISIONS HOSTAGE UNTIL THERE IS MORE PROGRESS IN BILATERAL ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS (WHICH ARE MOVING POORLY). BASIC CHOICES FACING GOH IN OUR BILATERAL TALKS INVOLVE BOTH TACTICAL BILATERAL NEGOTIATING CONSIDERATIONS AND HONDURAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL POLITICS. GOH TACTICS CONTINUE TO BE TO INVOLVE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THE TOTAL USG/GOH RELATIONSHIP IN THE BILATERAL TALKS AND TO DESCRIBE THAT RELATIONSHIP AS UNBALANCED IN FAVOR OF THE UNITED STATES. IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC POLITICS THE CHOICE APPEARS TO BE: (1) TO BRING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO AS RAPID A CONCLUSION AS POSSIBLE AND, IN CONJUNCTION WITH A SUAZO VISIT TO WASHINGTON, TRUMPET THE AGREEMENTS REACHED AS A TRIUMPH IN HONDURAN/US RELATIONS OR, (2) TO DRAG THE TALKS OUT INCONCLUSIVELY AND HOLD THEM UP AS EVIDENCE THAT HONDURAS DOESN'T LET ITSELF GET PUSHED AROUND BY THE UNITED STATES. THE CHOICE IS LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY THE SHAPE OF THE EMERGING USG/GOH AGREEMENT AND THE EASE OR DIFFICULTY OF PRESENTING IT AS A DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH. AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION IS THAT THIS EFFORT TO DEFINE THE OVERALL USG/GOH RELATIONSHIP IS TAKING PLACE WHILE SOME OF THE KEY FACTORS AFFECTING THAT RELATIONSHIP ARE IN FLUX; ESPECIALLY THE PROSPECTS FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF A MARXIST-LENINIST REGIME IN MANAGUA. THE ANSWER

9/22/85
RECLASSIFIED
DECLASSIFY
IN PART
ED Capions
IS authority to
CLASSIFY as (S) or (C) Sec.
DOWNGRADE IS to (S) or (C)
FOIA Exemptions
FA Exemptions

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
UNCLASSIFIED

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/01

TO THAT QUESTION CLEARLY IMPINGES ON WHAT FORM OF BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE US AND HONDURAS MAY BE MOST APPROPRIATE. IN THE MEANTIME, WHILE THERE MAY BE SETBACKS, WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION WITH THE GOH WITH PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE; AND WITH CONFIDENCE THAT THE BASIC FOUNDATION OF THE US/HONDURAN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP IS SOUND. END SUMMARY.

3. WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING DAS MCNAMARA'S MEETING LAST WEEK WAS POSITIVE (AS REPORTED TEGUCIGALPA 1431), I THINK A NOTE OF CAUTION IS ALSO IN ORDER.

4. THE GOH REPRESENTATIVES WERE CLEARLY PLEASED AT OUR OFFER OF A STATEMENT OF SECURITY ASSURANCES IN A WRITTEN AND VISIBLE, BUT NON-LEGAL FORM. THEY SAW THIS AS A STEP FORWARD ON THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE THEY HAD TABLED IN THEIR EARLY AUGUST DRAFT PROPOSAL, NAMELY THE REQUEST FOR A MUTUAL SECURITY PACT. MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY UBODORO ARRIAGA CHARACTERIZED OUR RESPONSE AS "VERY CONCILIATORY" TOWARD THE HONDURAN POSITION; AND MOST OF THE OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE MCNAMARA TALKS USED SIMILAR LANGUAGE. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOH'S FORMAL POSITION CONTINUES TO BE THAT MORE PERMANENT WRITTEN ASSURANCES ARE REQUIRED TO FULLY MEET GOH SECURITY NEEDS AND MUTUAL SECURITY LANGUAGE WAS INCLUDED IN THE REDRAFT OF THE 1954 MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WHICH THE GOH PRESENTED FOR OUR CONSIDERATION. THUS, WHILE THE GOH ACCEPTS OUR CURRENT POSITION AS A CLEAR IMPROVEMENT, WE CAN EXPECT THEIR DESIRE FOR A MORE FORMAL COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO SURFACE DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS, AT LEAST, FOR SOME TIME TO COME. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO DEPART FROM THAT POSITION WILL BE DETERMINED IN SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE BY OUR ANSWERS TO CERTAIN RESOURCE QUESTIONS WHICH THEY POSE AND BY THE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH AFFECT THE FUTURE AND PROSPECTS OF THE ANTI-SANDINISTA INSURGENCY.

5. WE HAVE LONG TRIED TO PERSUADE THE HONDURANS THAT THEIR SECURITY MAY BE BEST ASSURED BY A COMBINATION OF ACTIONS AND WORDS, NOT JUST THE LATTER. THUS ANY STATEMENT WE MIGHT MAKE WITH RESPECT TO SECURITY ASSURANCES SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
UNCLASSIFIED

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/01

THINGS WE BOTH DO, E.G., LEVELS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EXERCISES, COMBINED PLANNING, ETC. WE MAY HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN THIS EFFORT. I SAY ONLY "SOME" PROGRESS BECAUSE, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, IN THE ABSENCE OF FORMAL LONG-TERM SECURITY ASSURANCES BY THE UNITED STATES, THE GOH PERCEPTION OF ITS OWN SELF-INTEREST IS AFFECTED BY THE NOTION THAT OVERLY CLOSE TIES WITH US CAN BE A DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LIABILITY. THIS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE FACE OF A CONSOLIDATED MARXIST-LENINIST REGIME IN NICARAGUA. GOH THINKING IS ALSO AFFECTED BY THE IDEA THAT THE USG SHOULD BE WILLING TO PAY A SIGNIFICANT PRICE TO PURSUE REGIONAL ACTIVITIES FROM HONDURAS (I.E., INTELLIGENCE PLATFORMS, REGIONAL TRAINING, ETC.). HENCE THE IDEA OF "COMPENSATION" FOR THEIR COLLABORATION ON REGIONAL MATTERS IN THE FORM OF A SECURITY PACT OR IN THE FORM OF INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR ALL OF THE ABOVE.

6. SEVERAL THINGS ARE GOING ON AT ONCE HERE. THE GOH IS NEGOTIATING WITH US TO GET THE BEST DEAL IT CAN. IT'S PRIME AIM IS TO IMPROVE ITS SECURITY POSTURE BY STRENGTHENING TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE USG SECURITY GUARANTEES. THESE SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND A USG COMMITMENT TO ASSIST IN DEALING WITH THE CONTRA PROBLEM IN ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS. THEIR TECHNIQUE IS TO DOWNPLAY THE VALUE OF THE PRESENT USG/GOH SECURITY RELATIONSHIP TO HONDURAS AND TO CHARACTERIZE THE JOINT USG/GOH REGIONAL INTEREST AS PRIMARILY USG INTEREST. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOH IS GRAPPLING WITH HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PENDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER.

7. THERE IS MERIT TO THE GOH PERCEPTION OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO OUR REGIONAL STRATEGY BUT THE REASONING IS FLAWED IN TWO IMPORTANT RESPECTS. FIRST, THE GOH IDEA OF ITS SELF-IMPORTANCE IS CONSIDERABLY EXAGGERATED. DOCTOR SUAZO REPEATEDLY TELLS VISITORS FROM WASHINGTON, "WE ARE YOUR BEST FRIENDS IN CENTRAL AMERICA" AND TO NSC ADVISOR MCFARLANE, HE CLAIMED "THE SECURITY OF HONDURAS IS 90 PERCENT OF THE SECURITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA." AS A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE INFLATED OPINION OF ITS OWN IMPORTANCE TO US, THE GOH DOWNPLAYS THE MUTUALITY OF BENEFIT ASSOCIATED WITH A NUMBER OF THE ACTIVITIES WE CONDUCT HERE. THUS, IRONICALLY, WE OFTEN FIND THAT APPROVAL OF AN ACTIVITY WHICH WE HAVE CONCEIVED OF AS FOR THE BENEFIT OF HONDURAS IS TREATED BY THE GOH AS A UNILATERAL CONCESSION TO US.

8. HOW SINCERELY THE HONDURANS HOLD THESE BELIEFS AND TO WHAT EXTENT THEY ARE ADVANCED FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES, IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE. BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THEY HAVE PRESENTED HIGH DEMANDS IN OUR ONGOING BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS AND ALMOST SURELY ARE IN FOR SOMEWHAT OF A DISAPPOINTMENT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE ECONOMIC AREA WHERE WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE CONDITIONS FOR DISBURSEMENT OF ALREADY AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUNDS NOT TO MENTION THE

~~SECRET~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/02

● UNLIKELIHOOD OF OUR SATISFYING THEIR REQUEST FOR SUB-
STANTIAL AID INCREASES.

● 9. IT IS WITHIN THE FOREGOING CONTEXT THAT I WOULD
SUBMIT THAT WE STILL HAVE SUBSTANTIAL WORK (AND HAND
● HOLDING) AHEAD BEFORE GETTING THINGS ON A MORE EVEN
● KEEL WITH THE GOH. THERE MAY ALSO BE SOME FURTHER
DISAPPOINTMENTS AHEAD FOR OUR SIDE. SPECIFICALLY, I
AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LINKAGE BETWEEN
● OUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS. WHILE WE ARE
MAKING GOOD HEADWAY ON THE SECURITY DISCUSSIONS, WE
● ARE GETTING PRETTY MUCH NOWHERE IN OUR ECONOMIC TALKS;
AND IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF, AS WE APPROACHED SOME
● SORT OF CONCLUSION ON THE SECURITY TALKS, GOH WERE TO
PROPOSE THAT THEY BE PUT ON ICE PENDING FURTHER PROGRESS
● ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. THE KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR AGREEMENT
ON THE RMTC ARE ALMOST SATISFIED. THUS, ONE OF THE FIRST

~~SECRET/EXDIS~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/02

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/03

TESTS OF THIS LINKAGE IS LIKELY TO BE WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE ALLOWED TO PROCEED WITH THE RMTC (REGARDED AS AN ITEM OF MAJOR USG INTEREST) AS A DISCRETE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, EVEN ASSUMING WE ARE ALLOWED TO TREAT THE RMTC AS A SEPARATE ITEM, THE TENDENCY WILL CONTINUE TO ENCLOSE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE OVERALL AGREEMENT; AND EACH EXCEPTION WILL BE MADE ONLY AFTER DELAYS AND PAINFUL DELIBERATION. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET HONDURANS TO RISE ABOVE THIS KIND OF TRANSACTIONAL APPROACH; ESPECIALLY SINCE BOTH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE IN PLAY.

10. ALTHOUGH THE RMTC NEGOTIATION IS MOVING FORWARD, IT STILL NEEDS WORK. MOREOVER, THERE ARE OTHER AREAS OF MUTUAL REGIONAL COLLABORATION THAT MIGHT COME INTO JEOPARDY. THE EXERCISES? AHUAS TARA III PLANNING AND EXECUTION SEEMS TO BE FULLY ON TRACK. THE PROPOSED NAVAL EXERCISES (UNIVERSAL TREK) HAVE BEEN APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE AND FOR PLANNING PURPOSES. HOWEVER, APPROVAL OF THEIR EXECUTION COULD BE WITHHELD FOR EXTRANEIOUS CONSIDERATIONS AND WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE WISE TO PRESS THE GOH FOR A DEFINITIVE APPROVAL WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME TO SHIFT THE EXERCISES TO PUERTO RICO IF NECESSARY. UNTIL NOW AT LEAST, THE USE OF HONDURAN TERRITORY BY OUR MILITARY FOR THE COLLECTION OF INTELLIGENCE AGAINST SALVADORAN GUERRILLAS HAS NOT BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION.

11. HONDURAN PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 1985. A NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE INSTALLED IN JANUARY OF 1986. IN ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH US, THE GOH FACES ESSENTIALLY TWO CHOICES WITH RESPECT TO ITS ELECTORAL STRATEGY. THE FIRST WOULD BE TO SETTLE UP AS MUCH AS IT CAN NOW BEFORE THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST. UNDER THIS OPTION THEY WOULD TOUT WHATEVER AGREEMENTS ARE REACHED AND DOCTOR SUAZO'S MAY TRIP TO WASHINGTON AS A TRIUMPH IN HONDURAN/US RELATIONSHIPS. THIS WOULD ALLOW THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE TO USE A BILATERAL SUCCESS IN HIS SUMMER/FALL CAMPAIGN. THE OTHER ALTERNATIVE IS TO DRAG THE TALKS OUT INCONCLUSIVELY AND TO HOLD THEM UP AS EVIDENCE THAT HONDURAS DOESN'T LET ITSELF GET PUSHED AROUND BY THE UNITED STATES. THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE COULD THEN PROTECT HIS FLANK AGAINST POSSIBLE OPPOSITION ATTACKS THAT HONDURAS HAS "SOLD ITS SOVEREIGNTY." IT IS DIFFICULT TO GUESS FOR WHICH ALTERNATIVE THE GOH WILL OPT BUT NO DOUBT THE CHOICE WOULD BE EFFECTED MARKEDLY BY THE FLOW OF POPULAR PERCEPTIONS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE EMERGING AGREEMENT CAN BE PRESENTED SUCCESSFULLY AS A "DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH."

12. THE HONDURANS ARE SEEKING TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT WHICH DEFINES IN SOME DETAIL OUR TOTAL RELATIONSHIP. THEY ARE DOING THIS AT A TIME WHEN KEY FACTORS AFFECTING THAT RELATIONSHIP ARE IN FLUX. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE WITH THE FUTURE OF THE ANTI-SANDINISTA INSURGENCY AND THE PROSPECTS FOR CONSOLIDATION OF A MARXIST-LENINIST

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/03

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
UNCLASSIFIED

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/03

REGIME IN MANAGUA. IF THE INSURGENCY IS SEEN AS PRESENT-
ING A VIABLE ROUTE TO INHIBITING THE CONSOLIDATION OF
SUCH A REGIME, GOH DEMANDS ON THE USG MAY BE SOFTENED
OR POSTPONED. IF NICARAGUA IS SEEN AS DEFINITELY
"FALLING TO THE COMMUNISTS" THEN ONE BEGINS TO THINK
IN TERMS OF A CONTAINMENT POLICY. UNDER SUCH CIRCUM-
STANCES, THE GOH DEMANDS WOULD BE MORE URGENT AND,
QUITE POSSIBLY, A USG RESPONSE MORE FORTHCOMING. THIS
UNCERTAINTY MAKES A NEAT TERMINATION OF THESE TALKS
DIFFICULT. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE THE GOH
TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENTS ON CERTAIN DISCRETE PARTS OF OUR
RELATIONSHIP, THIS HAS BEEN VERY DIFFICULT AND MAY BE
INCREASINGLY SO. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED, WHERE NECESSARY,
TO ACCEPT THE DEFERRAL OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OR
EXERCISES. WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THIS AS A NEGATION BY
THE GOH OF THE BASIC PRO-US ORIENTATION BUT AS THE RESULT
OF COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS IN A SITUATION OF FLUX. IN

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
UNCLASSIFIED

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/03

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/04

THE ABSENCE OF THE STRONG AND CLEAR-SIGHTED LEADERSHIP PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED BY CARLOS FLORES AND GENERAL ALVAREZ, THE GOH APPEARS LACKING IN A UNIFIED CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO THEIR PROBLEMS. IT IS HARD TO DETERMINE WHICH OF DR. SUAZO'S PRINCIPAL ADVISERS MAY BE GUIDING HIM IN OVERALL STRATEGY AND, THOUGH HE APPEARS TO BE GETTING CONFLICTING ADVICE, WE ARE FAR FROM CERTAIN AS TO WHO IS PUSHING HIM IN WHICH DIRECTION. IN THIS CONFUSED SITUATION, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD MOVE FORWARD STEADFASTLY TO DEFINE OUR POSITIONS TO THE GOH IN A PATIENT AND PERSISTENT MANNER, SEEKING ALWAYS TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCERNS THAT THE LEADERS OF THIS SMALL NATION IN AN AREA OF INSTABILITY HAVE ABOUT THE PERCEIVED VAGARIES OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE BROAD BODY POLITIC OF HONDURAS AND ITS LEADERSHIP CLASS IS COMFORTABLE WITH A CLOSE AND GROWING SECURITY AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. IF THERE ARE TEMPORARY SETBACKS IN THESE TALKS OR OTHERWISE, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNITED STATES/HONDURAN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP IS SOUND.

NEGROPONTE

BT
#1692

NNNN

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

TEGUCIGALPA 01692/04