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INFO CONTADORA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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E.O.: 12356: N/A
TAGS: CTRA, GT, OREP, ASEC, PREL
SUBJECT: VICE FOREIGN MINISTER FRANCISCO VILLAGRAN
- DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES WITH CODEL
- MCCURDY

REF: (A) STATE 155880, (B) STATE 172338

SUMMARY

1. CODEL MCCURDY MET WITH VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS FRANCISCO VILLAGRAN ON JUNE 1 AND RECEIVED
AN OPEN AND FRANK BRIEFING REGARDING GOG VIEWS ON
REGIONAL ISSUES. NOTABLY, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
VILLAGRAN SAID THE EXISTENCE OF THE CONTRAS MAY BE
CAUSING NICARAGUA TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN
NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE CONTRAS PREVENT THE
SANDINISTAS FROM FURTHER SUPPORTING GUERRILLA
MOVEMENTS AGAINST THEIR NEIGHBORS. END SUMMARY.

SETTING

2. CODEL MCCURDY MET WITH VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, FRANCISCO VILLAGRAN, FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES
ON SUNDAY, JUNE 1.

- REP MCCURDY ASKED VILLAGRAN TO ADDRESS
THREE SUBJECTS: GOG FOREIGN POLICY, CONTADORA, AND
THE FUTURE OF USG/GOG RELATIONS.

INITIAL STATEMENT - CONTADORA ISSUES

3. VILLAGRAN MADE AN INITIAL STATEMENT ON THE THREE
SUBJECTS, BEGINNING WITH CONTADORA ISSUES, AND THEN
RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS FROM THE CODEL. HE TOLD THE
CODEL THAT HE HEADS THE GOG DELEGATION TO THE
CONTADORA TALKS AND THAT GUATEMALA PARTICIPATES IN
THESE DISCUSSIONS BASED ON ITS POLICY OF "ACTIVE
NEUTRALITY." HE TOLD CODEL THAT IDEOLOGICALLY
GUATEMALA WAS NOT REPEAT NOT NEUTRAL, IDEOLOGICALLY
IT IS ON THE SIDE OF THE DEMOCRACIES. NEVERTHELESS,
THE GOG'S POSITION IS THAT A POLICY OF ACTIVE
NEUTRALITY REPRESENTS ITS BEST OPPORTUNITY TO
CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE IN THE REGION.

THE GOG WANTS POLITICAL PLURALISM IN NICARAGUA AND
IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH THE GON'S MILITARY BUILDUP.
VILLAGRAN SAID THAT BUILDUP NEGATIVELY AFFECTS
PROSPECTS FOR PEACE.

VILLAGRAN SAID THE GOG CONSIDERS CONTADORA TO BE THE
BEST AND ONLY ALTERNATIVE FOR SEEKING PEACE IN THE
REGION. THIS HAS BEEN THE GOG'S POLICY FOR THE PAST
THREE YEARS. CONTADORA IS CONSIDERED THE BEST

ALTERNATIVE BASED ON GUATEMALA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS
AND ITS ASPIRATIONS FOR CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY.
HE STATED THAT THE GOG DOES NOT SUPPORT IRREGULAR
FORCES, DOES NOT HAVE IRREGULAR FORCES, AND IS NOT
CONDUCTING A MILITARY BUILDUP.

WEAPONS AND TROOP REDUCTIONS

4. VILLAGRAN SAID THE CONTADORA ACTA WILL NOT BE
SIGNED JUNE 6. UNRESOLVED ISSUES INCLUDE ARMS RE-
DUCTIONS TO ACHIEVE A REASONABLE MILITARY BALANCE,
AND MILITARY MANEUVERS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL,
AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. GUATEMALA'S PROPOSAL ON
ARMS REDUCTION WAS ACCEPTED BY COSTA RICA, ITS
CO-SPONSOR, AND SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE OTHER TWO
CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES, EL SALVADOR AND
HONDURAS. NICARAGUA HAS NOW SAID IT ACCEPTS THIS
PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE AS A USEFUL BASIS FOR NEGOTIA-
TIONS. THE GOG WANTS THEM TO REDUCE TROOP LEVELS.
THE GOG IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE ON ALL WEAPONS

SYSTEMS. IT IS AT LEAST A HOPEFUL SIGN THAT
NICARAGUA HAS PRODUCED A LIST OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS
ABOUT WHICH IT IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE.

PROSPECTS

5. VILLAGRAN SAID, FIRST AS A PERSONAL OPINION BUT
ADDING THAT HIS OPINION LIKELY WAS AN ACCURATE RE-
FLECTION OF THE VIEWS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN
COUNTRIES, THAT RESOLUTION OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES
WOULD LIKELY TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS. HE SAID NOT ALL
OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS ARE HOPEFUL AND
OPTIMISTIC. IT WAS DISAPPOINTING TO SET UP A
SIGNING DATE AND THEN NOT MAKE IT. THE CONTADORA
DRAFT IS COMPREHENSIVE, COVERING PLURALISM, ARMS,
AND DEMOCRACY. NICARAGUA HAD TAKEN A LONG TIME,
HOWEVER, TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON WEAPONS AND
TROOP ISSUES. THE GOG IS NOW SHOWING A MORE
FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE. THE GOG IS NOT SURE WHAT THIS
MEANS FOR BRINGING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A CLOSE, BUT
FEELS THE NICARAGUANS ARE MORE FLEXIBLE NOW THAN
DURING EARLIER PERIODS.

GOG FOREIGN RELATIONS

6. VILLAGRAN EXPLAINED WHAT IS BEHIND THE GOG'S
POLICY OF ACTIVE NEUTRALITY. HE SAID THAT GUATEMALA'S
GEOGRAPHY IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN
THE REGION, I.E., IT SHARES A BORDER WITH MEXICO.
THERE ARE REFUGEE CAMPS IN MEXICO WHICH HAVE IN THE
PAST BEEN USED BY GUATEMALA'S INSURGENTS. ALSO,
MEXICO AND VENEZUELA SUPPLY OIL TO GUATEMALA,
PROVIDING CREDIT FACILITIES THAT GUATEMALA COULD NOT
FIND ELSEWHERE. THE GOG DOES NOT AGREE WITH MEXICO
IN EVERYTHING, BUT IS INTERESTED IN THE TWO COUNTRIES
HAVING GOOD RELATIONS. MEXICO, FOR ITS PART, IS BE-
COMING MORE HELPFUL, THROUGH CHANGES IN ITS REFUGEE
PROGRAM THAT DEPRIVE THE INSURGENTS OF THEIR BASES
IN MEXICO. THE INSURGENTS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY
VILLAGRAN AS A WEAKENED FORCE, PERHAPS NUMBERING NO
MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND.

ON BELIZE, VILLAGRAN EXPLAINED TO THE CODEL THAT
GUATEMALA DID NOT RECOGNIZE IT AS AN INDEPENDENT
COUNTRY AND HAD HELD THIS POSITION BOTH WHILE

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GREAT BRITAIN HELD THE TERRITORY AND AFTER GREAT BRITAIN RECOGNIZED BELIZE AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE. VILLAGRAN SAID THE GOG IS WILLING TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE ON A MORE REASONABLE BASIS THAN IN THE PAST. A PROCESS OF INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A RESULT THAT IS REASONABLE AND ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES

7. VILLAGRAN SAID GUATEMALA FEELS VERY CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES AND THAT GUATEMALANS ADMIRE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE U.S. THE U.S. SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA'S RETURN TO DEMOCRACY IS APPRECIATED BY THE GOG. THAT SUPPORT DEFINITELY HELPED THE PROCESS OF SECURING FREE ELECTIONS AND THE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY.

VILLAGRAN CONTINUED, SAYING THE GOG FEELS THE USG IS A GOOD ALLY AND FRIEND. HE SAID THE GOG SUPPORTS THE USG ON EVERY MAJOR INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM, BUT THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES ON POLICY IN THE REGION. BOTH COUNTRIES AGREE, HE SAID, THAT THEY WANT DEMOCRACY IN EVERY CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE RULING PARTY OF GUATEMALA IS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THEREFORE THE GOG SUPPORTS ITS SISTER PARTY IN NICARAGUA AND ALSO SUPPORTS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN EL SALVADOR.

THE GOG WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE MANEUVERING ROOM OF THE ACTIVE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL FORCES IN NICARAGUA GROW, SINCE THEY REPRESENT THE MOST VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE SANDINISTAS.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION ON REGIONAL ISSUES

8. CODEL HAD A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH VILLAGRAN AFTER HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS. THE DISCUSSION IS PRESENTED BELOW BY MAJOR TOPIC.

AID TO THE CONTRAS

9. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, VILLAGRAN SAID THE GOG'S POSITION IS THAT IT DOESN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE U.S. DEBATE ABOUT THE CONTRAS. THE GOG CONSIDERS THIS TO BE AN INTERNAL PROBLEM OF THE UNITED STATES. VILLAGRAN SAID THAT IS WHAT GOG OFFICIALS ARE SAYING BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY. VILLAGRAN SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ANSWER WHETHER THE PRESSURE PROVIDED BY THE CONTRAS WAS HELPFUL TO THE CONTADORA NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THAT THE SANDINISTAS WERE UNDER PRESSURE. HE SAID, "PRESSURE SEEMS TO BE USEFUL." ASKED WHETHER MORE FUNDING FOR THE CONTRAS AND UNITY WITHIN UNO AFFECTS THE NEGOTIATIONS, VILLAGRAN SAID, "IT AFFECTS THEM, BUT I WON'T ELABORATE." ASKED TO CHARACTERIZE THE VIEWS OF OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES TOWARD THE CONTRAS, VILLAGRAN SAID THAT OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE POSITIVE FEELINGS TOWARD THE CONTRAS. THE GOG VIEWS THE CONTRA LEADERS, OR AT LEAST SOME OF THE LEADERS, WITH RESPECT. HE SAID IT WAS HARD TO GIVE AN OPINION AS TO WHETHER THEY COULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE. HE SAID PERHAPS THEY COULD. VILLAGRAN SAID THERE WERE STRONG ANTI-SANDINISTA SENTIMENTS IN EVERY COUNTRY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. HE SAID THAT SENTIMENT IS STRONG AMONG THE GUATEMALAN POPULATION AND IN OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES. VILLAGRAN SAID THE GOG

WAS TRYING TO BE CAREFUL AND HOPEFUL AS REGARDS ITS GOVERNMENT POLICIES, BUT FRANKLY, IN GUATEMALA IT IS HARD TO FIND SOMEONE WHO LIKES THE SANDINISTAS. VILLAGRAN WAS ASKED WHAT IT WOULD MEAN FOR INTERNAL CONFLICTS THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AMERICA IF IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS THERE WERE NO CONTRAS. HE REPLIED THAT GUATEMALA HAS A GUERRILLAMOVEMENT, THERE IS A GUERRILLAMOVEMENT IN EL SALVADOR, AND NICARAGUA HAS ONE WITH THE CONTRAS. THE GOG DOESN'T WANT NICARAGUA TO SUPPORT GUERRILLAMOVEMENTS IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA. VILLAGRAN SAID, "HAVING THE CONTRAS IN NICARAGUA PREVENTS THAT. THAT IS A FACT, WE TAKE THIS AS A FACT."

TIMING OF NEGOTIATIONS

10. ASKED ABOUT A POSSIBLE JUNE 27 SIGNING DATE, VILLAGRAN SAID THAT WAS TOO SOON TO EXPECT A SIGNING. HIS FEELING WAS THAT ARMS, TROOP LEVELS, AND VERIFICATION ISSUES COULD BE RESOLVED. HE SAID THE PROCESS DEPENDS MOSTLY ON THE ATTITUDE OF NICARAGUA -- WHETHER IT'S WILLING TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY. HE SAID THE FAILURE TO HAVE A JUNE 6 SIGNING WAS A SETBACK FOR CONTADORA, BUT THAT GUATEMALA WAS WILLING TO CONTINUE. HE SAID THAT IT HAD TAKEN A LONG TIME TO GET SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS ON ARMS AND TROOPS. THOSE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS HAD JUST BEGUN WITHIN THE PAST TWO WEEKS. GUATEMALA IS HOPEFUL THAT THE NICARAGUANS ARE SERIOUS. VILLAGRAN SAID, "WE ARE NOT CERTAIN. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF PRESSURE ON THEM TO BECOME SERIOUS, BOTH FROM THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES." ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE REMAINING DIFFERENCES, HE SAID,

"WE ARE STILL FAR FROM AN AGREEMENT" AND THAT SEVERAL MONTHS WOULD BE NEEDED TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES. HE SAID THE PARTICIPANTS MIGHT BE WILLING TO SET A FURTHER DEADLINE.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND PLURALISM

11. VILLAGRAN SAID THAT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IS NOT THE MAJOR STUMBLING POINT FOR GUATEMALA. HE SAID THERE WERE ALREADY SECTIONS ON THIS IN THE ACTA AND THAT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN EVERY MAJOR DECLARATION THIS YEAR. HE SAID SOME FEEL THE SECTIONS ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION ARE NOT STRONG AND THOROUGH ENOUGH. HE SAID, "ITS HARD TO FORCE A COUNTRY TO HOLD FREE ELECTIONS, PROVIDE ACCESS TO ALL THE RIGHTS COMMON TO A DEMOCRACY, BUT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IS IMPORTANT TO US." VILLAGRAN SAID GUATEMALA IS PROPOSING A CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT WITH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. A MAJOR OBJECTIVE IS TO SUPPORT POLITICAL PLURALISM IN EVERY COUNTRY. HE SAID THE FOUR CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES SHARE A COMMON CONCERN ABOUT THE DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY AND AGREE THERE SHOULD BE PLURALISM IN EVERY COUNTRY.

ARMS, TROOPS, AND VERIFICATION

12. VILLAGRAN SAID THAT NICARAGUA HAD AGREED ON A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATING ON ARMS CONTROL ISSUES. HE SAID, "WE DON'T KNOW IF AN ACTUAL AGREEMENT WILL EVER BE REACHED. NICARAGUA IS STILL UNWILLING TO NEGOTIATE TROOP LEVELS AND SOME WEAPON SYSTEMS. GUATEMALA IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE THESE ISSUES."

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WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHETHER NICARAGUA IS." VILLAGRAM SAID GUATEMALA WOULD INSIST ON SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF SECURITY ISSUES PRIOR TO SIGNING AN AGREEMENT. HE SAID VERIFICATION WILL REQUIRE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, INCLUDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT. IT WILL REQUIRE A LARGE NUMBER OF INSPECTORS AND AN OFFICE OF COMMISSIONERS.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

13. VILLAGRAM SAID THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT, REPEAT NOT, BE A SIGNATORY TO THE TREATY ITSELF. HE SAID THAT EVERY COUNTRY UNDERSTANDS THE CONCERNS OF THE USG. HE SAID GUATEMALA FEELS THE USG HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN ITS STATEMENTS. ASKED ABOUT THE RECENT PENTAGON PIECE, HE REPLIED SIMPLY THAT IT'S USEFUL TO SEE THE VIEWS WITHIN THE USG. ASKED IF HE FELT THE UNITED STATES SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, HE SAID, "WE RESPECT AMBASSADOR HABIB HIGHLY. HIS ROLE IS VERY POSITIVE."

GOOD FAITH

14. VILLAGRAM SAID THERE WERE SOME POSITIVE SIGNS ON THE PART OF THE NICARAGUANS THAT WERE NOT PRESENT BEFORE, BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT THEY ARE NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH. HE DEFINED THESE SIGNS AS: (1) THEIR AGREEING TO THE GOG PROPOSAL AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION ON ARMS, (2) THEIR PROVIDING A LIST OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS FOR NEGOTIATION, AND (3) THEIR INDICATING A WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITHOUT AN ADDENDUM FROM THE UNITED STATES REGARDING NON INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE SAID THAT THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES ARE LESS HOPEFUL ABOUT THE GOOD FAITH OF THE NICARAGUANS.

ESQUIPULAS

15. VILLAGRAM SAID THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF ESQUIPULAS WERE THE DECISIONS TO HAVE A

CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT AND TO HAVE SUMMITS MORE OFTEN.

COMMENT

16. VILLAGRAM'S RESPONSES SHOWED MORE SUPPORT FOR USG POSITIONS THAN HE HAS DISPLAYED IN OTHER DISCUSSIONS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING PRIVATELY IN A SETTING IN WHICH HE FELT COMFORTABLE.
END COMMENT.
GAMBLE

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