

Belize

Prime Minister

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FM WASHINGTON 241930Z DEC 80

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 5007 OF 24 DECEMBER 1980,

INFO GUATEMALA CITY, BELMOPAN (PERSONAL), MEXICO CITY, UKMIS NEW YORK.

YOUR TELNO 1962: BELIZE/GUATEMALA

ms

1. T U R CROSSED MY TELNO 4986.
2. THE APPARENT HARDENING OF THE GUATEMALAN POSITION MAY INDEED OWE SOMETHING TO THEIR EXPECTATION THAT U S/GUATEMALAN RELATIONS WILL IMPROVE UNDER A REAGAN ADMINISTRATION. IN THIS THE GUATEMALANS, LIKE A NUMBER OF OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS, MAY BE OVER-ESTIMATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERSONAL SPECULATIONS OF THEIR REPUBLICAN CONTACTS (MY TELNO 4986). WE KNOW THAT THESE CONTACTS HAVE FOR THE MOST PART BEEN THOSE ON THE FRINGES OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WHO HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF IMPRECISE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO CONVEY UNDERSTANDINGS TO WHICH THEY HOPE THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TO BIND ITSELF. THE MOST ACTIVE OF THESE HAVE BEEN JOHN CARBAUGH AND PEDRO SAN JUAN (BOTH MEMBERS OF THE STATE DEPT TRANSITION TEAM WHICH HAIG HAS SUMMARILY DISSANDED), TOGETHER WITH SILBERMAN (RECENTLY RESIGNED HEAD OF THE C I A TRANSITION TEAM), AND CLETO DI GIOVANNI (A PRIVATE CONSULTANT). IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT ANY OF THEM WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.
3. THUS WE NEED NOT ASSUME THAT THE SENTIMENTS WHICH THE GUATEMALANS WANT TO AND DO HEAR FROM THEIR REPUBLICAN INTERLOCUTORS INDICATE THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL NECESSARILY LEAN ON BELIZE RATHER THAN GUATEMALA. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW FAR WE CAN INFLUENCE THE NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LATIN AMERICA, AND I SEE ADVANTAGE IN AN EARLY VISIT TO WASHINGTON. WE WILL HAVE TO CONSULT HIM PERSONALLY ONCE HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED, TO FIND WHEN HE WOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE A DISCUSSION. IN THE MEANTIME HARDING'S TALK WITH NEUMANN ON 4 DECEMBER WILL HAVE ENSURED THAT THE PROBLEM IS COVERED IN THE BRIEFING MATERIAL PREPARED FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION: AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO BRIEF THOSE WHO MAY HOLD POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY.

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4. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE PERHAPS NOT BEST PLACED TO JUDGE, THE GUATEMALANS' LATEST SABRE-RATTLING COMES AS NO SURPRISE TO THE AMERICANS, WHO HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED THAT OUR STRATEGY WILL BE SMOOTHLY ACCOMPLISHED. OFFICIALS HERE NATURALLY TEND TO PLAY DOWN SUGGESTIONS THAT THE GUATEMALANS ARE RESPONDING TO WINKS AND NUDGES FROM SOME REPUBLICANS AND EMPHASIZE INSTEAD THAT THE CONCEPT OF PARALLELISM WHICH H M G HAS ADOPTED WILL INEVITABLY CREATE MOMENTS OF TENSION.

HENDERSON.

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