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S E C R E T

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SECRET

FROM UKMIS NEW YORK 060202Z FEB 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 105 DATED 5 FEBRUARY 81

AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, GUATEMALA CITY, BELMOPAN (PERSONAL)

BELIZE/GUATEMALA: NEW YORK TALKS

1. SKINNER-KLEE, WHO MADE THE RUNNING THROUGHOUT, OPENED WITH A TOUGH AND AGGRESSIVE REASSERTION OF THE GUATEMALAN POSITION. HE REJECTED THE PARALLEL PATH CONCEPT, DEPLORED CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS BEFORE A SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED, DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN GUATEMALA WOULD BRING ABOUT SOLUTION AND DESCRIBED WHAT WOULD BE THE GUATEMALAN RESPONSE TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A DATE FOR A CONFERENCE. IN THE ABSENCE OF A SETTLEMENT (NON-RECOGNITION OF AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE, REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE OR RESPECT ITS BORDERS, SUSPENSION OF NEGOTIATIONS AND OF ALL ASSISTANCE TO BELIZE, DISRUPTION OF CROSS-BORDER COMMERCE, SUSPENSION OF COMMUNICATIONS INCLUDING SEA LINKS, AND INTERDICTION OF ALL TRADE WITH BRITAIN.)
2. DESPITE THESE THREATS, HE STRESSED THAT GUATEMALA WAS READY TO OFFER THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP AND TO RECOGNISE BELIZE AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE WITHIN ITS EXISTING FRONTIERS, PROVIDED THAT AN HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT HAD FIRST BEEN REACHED.
3. THIS UNCOMPROMISING BEGINNING SOFTENED NOTABLY DURING A DAY OF CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRIENDLY EXCHANGES. BY THE CLOSE, WE HAD ESTABLISHED THAT THE GUATEMALAN TEAM HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY EMPOWERED BY PRESIDENT LUCAS TO SEEK A SPEEDY AND PERMANENT SETTLEMENT PROVIDED THAT IT CONTAINED SOME CONCRETE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORIAL CLAIM. SKINNER-KLEE STATED SPECIFICALLY THAT HE COULD SETTLE FOR CESSION OF THE SAPODILLA AND RANGUANA CAYS PLUS LEASE OF LAND SOUTH OF A LINE DUE WEST FROM MOTHER POINT TO THE WESTERN BORDER. HE WAS TOLD THAT ANY LEASE OF LAND ON THE MAINLAND CREATED EXCEPTIONAL DIFFICULTY FOR BELIZE. HERRERA, IN ONE OF ONLY TWO INTERVENTIONS, THEN INDICATED THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS OF THE KIND LISTED IN OUR 16 POINTS MIGHT BE REGARDED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR MAINLAND CESSION OR LEASE OF TERRITORY PROVIDED THAT AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON THE CAYS AND ASSOCIATED SEABED RIGHTS WITH MARITIME BOUNDARY DELIMITATION. THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY SKINNER-KLEE, AND COURTENAY THOUGHT THAT SOME CONCESSION OVER THE CAYS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE THOUGH HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER ANY PROSPECT OF AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS OF HERRERA'S PROPOSAL WITHOUT CONSULTING PREMIER PRICE. HE AGREED TO DO SO IMMEDIATELY BY TELEGRAM.

S E C R E T

/4. SKINNER-KLEE

S E C R E T

4. SKINNER-KLEE, AND OTHERS IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, LEFT NO DOUBT OF THEIR DESPERATION FOR ANY SOLUTION WHICH MIGHT BE SALEABLE TO GUATEMALAN PUBLIC OPINION. SKINNER-KLEE ALSO REVEALED THAT BEFORE DEPARTURE, THE GUATEMALAN TEAM HAD BEEN GIVEN DISCRETION (AFTER LENGTHY CONSULTATION IN GUATEMALA BETWEEN POLITICAL GROUPS, PRIVATE SECTOR INTERESTS AND THE MILITARY) TO SETTLE DEFINITELY ON WHATEVER HONOURABLE TERMS THEY COULD ACHIEVE.

5. IT IS CONCEIVEABLE, THOUGH AS YET BY NO MEANS CERTAIN, THAT AN OFFER OF A LEASE ON THE SAPODILLA AND PROBABLY SOME ADDITIONAL CAYS TO THE NORTH, WITH ASSOCIATED MARITIME BOUNDARY DELINEATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MIGHT CLINCH A SETTLEMENT. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT GUATEMALANS WOULD AGREE TO A FURTHER MINISTERIAL MEETING OR INDEED ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS THE PRESENT MEETING PRODUCES REALISTIC PROSPECT OF EARLY AGREEMENT. I.E. BEFORE THE DATE OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IS ANNOUNCED

PARSONS

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DESKBY 061400Z (TO BELMOPAN)

FROM UKMIS NEW YORK 060041Z FEB 81

TO IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN

TELEGRAM NUMBER PERSONAL 1 DATED 5 FEBRUARY 81

INFO IMMEDIATE F C O PRIORITY GUATEMALA CITY.

FOR WOODFIELD FROM HENNESSY

GRATEFUL YOU PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM MINISTER COURTENAY TO
DEPUTY PREMIER FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION TO PREMIER IMMEDIATELY
ON RECEIPT

BEGINS

ATTITUDE OF GUATEMALAN DELEGATION APPEARS TO CONFIRM THEIR AUTHORITY
TO REACH FINAL SETTLEMENT AT THIS ROUND AND ALSO CONFIRMS A
MOOD TO MAKE CONCESSIONS, AND AN URGENCY ON THEIR PART NOT TO
POSTPONE FINAL AGREEMENT. OUR DELEGATION SENSES A POSSIBLE
BREAK THROUGH. LAND CESSION REMAINS THEIR OBJECTIVE BUT IT MAY BE
POSSIBLE GET AWAY WITH MARITIME CONCESSIONS INVOLVING LONG
LEASE OF SOME SOUTHERN CAYES (AS AGREED IN ITEM 14 OF 16
POINTS IE SOME CAYES IN THE SAPODILLA AND RANGUANA RANGES) AND
ASSOCIATED TERRITORIAL WATERS; AUGMENTED BY AS YET UNDEFINED
ACCESS FROM PETEN TO THE SEA. IF THIS IS NEGOTIABLE EVENTS MAY
CHANGE SUDDENLY AND AGREEMENT MAY BE ROUND THE CORNER. IN THESE
CIRCUMSTANCES GRATEFUL TO KNOW WHETHER YOU COULD AGREE TO
MY CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS ON ABOVE BASIS. IF SO FURTHER
CONSULTATIONS MAY BE NECESSARY - COURTENAY
ENDS

PARSONS

PA