

CONFIDENTIAL

O 192300Z FEB 81
FM BELMOPAN
TO FCO LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL ' UK COMMS ONLY
DESKBY 200900Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 100 OF 19 FEBRUARY 1981
AND TO IMMEDIATE LAGOS (FOR PS/SECRETARY OF STATE)
INFO GUATEMALA CITY, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, MEXICO CITY

GUATEMALA CITY TELNO 076 OF 17 FEBRUARY TO YOU : BELIZE/
GUATEMALA

1. H M CONSUL, GUATEMALA CITY IS PROBABLY RIGHT IN THINKING THAT A BETTER OFFER FROM THE BELIZEANS WOULD HAVE KEPT THE GUATEMALANS AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE A LITTLE LONGER. BUT BELIZEANS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD HAVE BROUGHT A SETTLEMENT. BEFORE PUTTING PRICE IN THE DOCK, THEREFORE, AND SCREWING FURTHER CONCESSIONS OUT OF HIM NEXT WEEK - WHICH COULD BE A SCARRING EXPERIENCE - YOU MAY CARE TO HAVE THE BELIZEAN PERCEPTION OF WHAT TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK.

2. BELIZEANS SEE THE GUATEMALAN MOVE TO BREAK OFF THE TALKS LAST WEEK AS DELIBERATE AND CALCULATED. PIQUE MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR BUT BELIZEANS FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO CAUSE THE GUATEMALANS TO THROW AWAY THE CHANCE OF A SETTLEMENT IF THEY HAD REALLY WANTED ONE. PRICE TAKES THE VIEW THAT THEY WANTED TERRITORY. HAVING FAILED TO GET IT THEY GRASPED THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY THE EMBARRASSING PRESS LEAKS AND THE INADEQUATE BELIZEAN OFFER TO BREAK OFF THE TALKS WHILE THEY WERE IN A POSITION TO SHOW THE AMERICANS THAT THEY HAD TRIED - BUT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO GO ON.

3. BELIZEANS SEE THE WHOLE LONG HISTORY OF THE DISPUTE STUDDED WITH EXAMPLES OF HOPES RAISED ONLY TO BE DASHED AT THE LAST MINUTE BY THE GUATEMALANS. THE ONE CONSTANT ELEMENT IN ALL THE NEGOTIATIONS HAS BEEN THE GUATEMALAN DEMAND FOR TERRITORY. WHILE SKINNER-KLEE HAS, IN RECENT TALKS, SAID THAT GUATEMALA DOES NOT NEED TERRITORY - THEREBY SUCCEEDING IN GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY WOULD SETTLE WITHOUT IT - HE HAS NEVER BEEN PINNED DOWN. BELIZEANS BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT HE IS, AS IN THE PAST, STRINGING THEM ALONG. WITH THE ESCALATING GUERRILLA WAR NOW SPILLING OVER BELIZE'S BORDERS AND WITH ARMS TO FIGHT THAT WAR AT A PREMIUM, THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT IS THEY BELIEVE NOW USING THE EMOTIVE ISSUE OF BELIZE TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM TROUBLES AT HOME IN ORDER TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE EXTERNAL THREAT (IMAGINED RATHER THAN REAL) PRESENTED BY AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE ON THEIR EASTERN BORDER.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ 4. BY INFLATING

CONFIDENTIAL

4. BY INFLATING THAT THREAT AND PLAYING ON THE PATRIOTIC FEELINGS OF THEIR PEOPLE, THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT IS, IN BELIZEAN EYES, AIMING TO WIN SUPPORT AT HOME FOR A TOUGH ANTI-BELIZE POLICY WHILE LOOKING TO THE USA FOR SUPPORT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WHAT THEY CALL COMMUNIST SUBVERSION. THUS BELIZEANS HAVE NO FAITH IN GUATEMALAN PROTESTATIONS OF GOOD FAITH. THEY BELIEVE A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT TERRITORY, WOULD BE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT AND NO IN THEIR INTERESTS. AND SINCE NEITHER SANCTIONS NOR BRIBES ARE IN THEIR GIFT, THEY BELIEVE THEIR ONLY COURSE IS TO PRESENT THE GUATEMALANS WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI, IE TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY TO INDEPENDENCE. THEY BELIEVE THIS COURSE WOULD IN FACT SUIT THE GUATEMALAN BOOKS.

5. IF THIS ANALYSIS IS ACCEPTED, VARIOUS CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN:-

(1) FURTHER CONCESSIONS BY THE BELIZEANS (SHORT OF CONCEDED A LARGE SLICE OF TERRITORY) ARE UNLIKELY TO BRING A SETTLEMENT ANY NEARER.

(2) THE ATTITUDE OF THE US IS THE KEY TO A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. ONLY THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO APPLY STICKS AND CARROTS WITH ANY DEGREE OF SUCCESS.

(3) IF THE AMERICANS BACK US THEN THE PRESENT BELIZEAN OFFER IS LIKELY TO SUFFICE. IF THEY DO NOT, ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS ARE UNLIKELY TO HELP.

(4) PRESENT GUATEMALAN THREATS AGAINST BELIZE ARE MORE IMAGINARY THAN REAL.

FCO PASS LAGOS, GUATEMALA CITY, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND MEXICO CITY

HENNESSY

BT

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

BELIZE/GUATEMALA LIMITED

M & C D
DEF D
S AM D
NAD
UND
PUSD
PLANNING STAFF
LEGAL ADVISERS
CCD
NEWS D
INFORMATION D
PS

PS/LPS
PS/MR HURD
PS/MR RIDLEY
PS/FUS
SIR E YOUDE
MR DAY
SIR A ACLAND
MR P H MOBERLY
MR URE
LORD N G LENNOX
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

BELIZE/GUATEMALA