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FM GUATEMALA CITY 062145Z MAR 81

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 115 OF 06 MARCH

R F I: BELMOPAN (PERSONAL) WASHINGTON AND UKMIS NEW YORK

*The talks are still on  
course. Both sides have made  
concessions  
mt Phut*

**BELIZE/GUATEMALA**

1. I LUNCHEON ON 6 MARCH WITH DELPREE OF THE MFA BELIZE AFFAIRS OFFICE.
2. HE SAID THERE WOULD NEVER BE ANOTHER CHANCE LIKE THE PRESENT ONE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. THE ONE PROBLEM WAS PRICE'S STUBBORNNESS, COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT SHOMAN DID NOT WANT A SETTLEMENT. FOR SHOMAN INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT WAS PREFERABLE AS THE RESULTING INSTABILITY WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO INTRODUCE COMMUNISM TO BELIZE. DELPREE THOUGHT THAT PRESIDENT LUCAS WAS COMPLETELY SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE FOR A SETTLEMENT AS HE WISHED TO CONCENTRATE ON GUATEMALA'S OTHER PRESSING NEEDS. NEVER BEFORE HAD A GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT GIVEN NEGOTIATORS SUCH UNEQUIVOCAL INSTRUCTIONS THAT THEY SHOULD TRY AND REACH A SETTLEMENT.
3. DELPREE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD STILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT TO SELL THE PACKAGE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT WAS REVEALED THAT IT DID NOT CONTAIN A 20-KILOMETRE STRIP. IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO BUILD UP THE OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE PACKAGE SO AS TO CONCEAL THE LACK OF TERRITORY. DELPREE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE MAJORITY OF BELIZEANS WOULD SETTLE FOR AN AGREEMENT ON THE TERMS BEING PROPOSED NOW BY GUATEMALA. IF THERE WERE NO AGREEMENT AND GUATEMALA LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE TALKS HAD FAILED BECAUSE PRICE HAD REFUSED TO AGREE TO SUCH MINIMAL GUATEMALAN DEMANDS, MOST BELIZEANS WOULD BE APPALLED.
4. IF THE TALKS FAILED THE OUTLOOK WAS GLOOMY ESPECIALLY FOR BELIZE. WHO WOULD WANT TO INVEST IN A COUNTRY UNDER THREAT OF WAR? ONCE THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS TOWARDS UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE HAD BEGUN, THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. THE ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE COURSE, PROVIDED THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS HAD NOT BEEN STARTED, WAS US MEDIATION.

NASH

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