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FM GUATEMALA CITY 05/1456Z JUN 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

DESKBY 05/1600Z

TELEGRAM NUMBER 239 OF 05 JUNE

R F I : IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN (PERSONAL)

R F I : ROUTINE WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO SAVING MEXICO CITY

BELIZE/GUATEMALA NEGOTIATIONS

1. HERRERA CAME TO MY HOUSE ON 04 JUNE AND STAYED FOR NEARLY THREE HOURS DISCUSSING THE SITUATION.
2. HE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD RECEIVED HIS REPORT ON THE NEW YORK NEGOTIATIONS WITH DISMAY, AND FELT THAT OUR OFFER OF ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS WAS NOT ONLY DERISORY BUT A WITHDRAWAL FROM OUR LONG STANDING POSITION. HE ALSO FELT THAT THE PROPOSALS ON THE CAYS WERE A WITHDRAWAL FROM WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD TO BE THE TACIT AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE MINISTER OF STATE THAT GUATEMALA WOULD ENJOY RIGHTS AMOUNTING TO, EVEN IF NOT CALLED, SOVEREIGN RIGHTS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD DELAYED SUBMITTING THE REPORT ON AND THE DOCUMENTS AGREED IN NEW YORK TO PRESIDENT LUCAS UNTIL THEY HAD BEEN TRANSLATED INTO SPANISH, BUT , SINCE THE TRANSLATIONS HAD BEEN MADE TWO DAYS AGO, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD REFUSED TO SEE THE NEGOTIATING TEAM OR TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN THEM AND THE PRESIDENT.
3. HERRERA ALSO SAID , IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, THAT SKINNER KLEE HAD BECOME SCARED, HAD TURNED AGAINST A SETTLEMENT, AND WAS ADVISING THAT EVEN IF A SETTLEMENT WERE REACHED THERE WAS NO NEED TO SUMMON A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY UNTIL THE NEW YEAR. OF THE NEW YORK TEAM, DELPREE AND COLONEL CASTELLANOS HAD TURNED AGAINST A SETTLEMENT BECAUSE THEY FELT THAT WE HAD NEGOTIATED IN BAD FAITH, THAT ONLY LEFT SAENZ DE TEJADA, WHOM HERRERA DISMISSED AS AN AMIABLE TECHNICIAN. DURING THE NEW YORK TALKS GENERAL MENDOZA, WHO WAS PRESENT ON THE SIDELINES, HAD TOLD HERRERA TO BREAK OFF THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT HAD BEEN OVERRULED BY HERRERA.
4. HERRERA SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS AND ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS WAS THE SUBJECT WHERE WE HAD CAUSED THE MAXIMUM OFFENCE BY APPEARING TO RENEGE ON PREVIOUS OFFERS. I PRESSED HIM ON THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS AND MILITARY USE OF THE CAYS SEMI COLON IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE FORMER WAS THE ISSUE THAT REALLY COUNTED. HE SPOKE OF THE NEED TO BE ABLE TO DEFEND THE CAYS AGAINST A POSSIBLE HONDURAN ATTACK, BUT ADMITTED THAT THE PACKAGE OF ACCESS, MARITIME BOUNDARY, NAVIGATION AREA, AND SEABED EXPLOITATION REALLY CARRIED WEIGHT, AND WAS THE ISSUE WHERE WE HAD CREATED THE WORST IMPRESSION. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT FOR THE ARMY A COMMITMENT BY BELIZE TO JOIN THE OAS AND THE RIO TREATY WAS ESSENTIAL.
5. HE SAID THAT AT PRESENT THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF CASTILLO VALDEZ GOING TO LONDON AT ALL, BECAUSE HE FELT PERSONALLY CHEATED. HE

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THOUGHT THAT IF A MESSAGE COULD BE SENT TO CASTILLO FROM THE MINISTER OF STATE OFFERING A MORE FORTHCOMING APPROACH TO THE MARITIME QUESTIONS, AND STATING CLEARLY THAT HMG RECOGNISED THAT GUATEMALA HAD A JUST AND EQUITABLE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS (NOT, REPEAT NOT, A CHANNEL ONE MILE WIDE) THEN CASTILLO MIGHT AGREE TO GO TO LONDON. UNLESS SUCH A MESSAGE WERE SENT QUICKLY IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 15 JUNE. IN THE FOLLOWING WEEK THERE WAS TO BE A MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN FOREIGN MINISTERS, WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT NO MEETING WOULD BE POSSIBLE BEFORE 29 JUNE. HE, UNLIKE SKINNER KLEE, STILL HOPED TO HAVE AN AGREEMENT RATIFIED BY ALL PARTIES BEFORE BELIZE BECAME ANDEPENDENT, BUT IF THINGS WERE DELAYED THE CHANCES BECAME SMALLER.

6. IN REPLY TO FURTHER QUESTIONS HE ADMITTED THAT THE CAYS WERE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE QUESTION OF WATERS, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT THE CAYS COULD BEST BE DEALT WITH BY KEEPING AS CLOSE TO POSSIBLE TO THE HEADS OF AGREEMENT, WITHOUT DEFINING WHAT USE AND ENJOYMENT REALLY MEANT. WHEN I SAID THAT THIS WOULD PUT THE BELIZE GOVERNMENT IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION IN THEIR REFERNDUM HE AGREED, BUT THOUGHT THE QUESTION OF MILITARY USE WOULD BE BEST AVOIDED RATHER THAN SPILT OUT.

7. HE SAID THAT CASTILLO VALDEZ AND PRESIDENT LUCAS WERE STILL COMMITTED TO THE IDEA OF AN AGREEMENT, BUT OF THE ADVISERS WHO AGREED WITH THIS POLICY THERE NOW REMAINED HERRERA ALONE, THE OTHERS HAD LEFT THE SINKING SHIP AFTER NEW YORK. HE ADDED THAT ON HIS WAY HOME FROM NEW YORK HE HAD MET IN MIAMI, BY CHANCE, GENERAL VERNON WALTERS WHO HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND DISMAYED BY HERRERA'S ACCOUNT OF THE MINIMAL OFFERS ON CAYS AND WATERS. HE ALSO SAID THAT WHILST IN NEW YORK HE HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY , BUT HAD NOT SEEN, ARANDA WHO HAD BEEN IN WASHINGTON, HE ASSUMED THAT THE LATTER WAS AFTER MONEY WHICH, HE SAID, BY TRADITION WAS THE ONLY THING THAT CAUSED BELIZEAN POLITICIANS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH GUATEMALANS.

8. HERRERA WAS SPEAKING VERY FRANKLY, AND WHAT HE SAID ABOUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REACTION SQUARES WITH THE FRIENDLY BUT UNCOMMUNICATIVE LINE THAT CASTILLO VALDEZ HAS TAKEN ON THE TWO OCCASIONS THAT I HAVE MET HIM SOCIALLY THIS WEEK.

9. I RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, THAT A MESSAGE BE SENT ON THE LINES SUGGESTED IN PARA 5 ABOVE, AND CONTAINING THE INVITATION SUGGESTED IN MY TELNO 236, AND THAT IT BE SENT, IF POSSIBLE, IN TIME FOR ME TO DELIVER IT ON 08 JUNE. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT WITHOUT SUCH A MESSAGE NOT ONLY WILL WE NOT HAVE THE GUATEMALANS IN LONDON, BUT THE GROWING WEIGHT OF ADVICE THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO LET BELIZE COME TO UNRECOGNISED INDEPENDENCE AND WAIT FOR THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT TO ENFORCE GUATEMALA'S CLAIM MIGHT PREVAIL.

WILMSHURST

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