

BELIZE/GUATEMALA

ADVANCE COPIES

DB 060800Z

Belize

PS

PS/LPS

PS/MR RIDLEY

PS/PUS

MR DAY

MR URE

PS/NO 10 ~~DOWNING~~ STREET

HD/M & C D (2)

DIO CABINET OFFICE

HD/S AM D

HD/DEF D

HD/NEWS D

HD/UND

RESIDENT CLERK

0 052350Z JUN 81

FM BELMOPAN

TO FCO LONDON

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L UK COMMS ONLY

DESKBY 060800Z

SIC TELNO 301

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 301 OF 5 JUNE 1981

INFO IMMEDIATE GUATEMALA CITY

ROUTINE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, MEXICO CITY

YOUR TELNO PERSONAL 61: BELIZE NEGOTIATIONS

1. I ASKED THE PREMIER THIS MORNING - BEFORE RECEIPT OF YOUR TUR - IF HE WAS YET IN A POSITION TO LET YOU HAVE THE BELIZEAN NEGOTIATING POSITION ON THE VARIOUS POINTS IN THE TREATY THAT STILL REMAIN TO BE SETTLED. PRICE SAID THAT, FOLLOWING VERY LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS ON THE JOINT COMMISSION DRAFT, THE CABINET HAD REACHED CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS WHICH HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO EXPLAIN, ALTHOUGH HE HAD ONLY ROUGH NOTES OF WHAT HAD BEEN SAID.

PAGE TWO RBLABCR 501 C O N F I D E N T I A L UK COMMS ONLY

2. FOLLOWING ARE THE CABINET'S VIEWS AS OUTLINED BY PRICE:-

(A) ON USE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE CAYES:

(I) FULL MILITARY USE COULD NOT BE CONTEMPLATED, THOUGH A JOINTLY OPERATED RADAR STATION, VISITS BY SOLDIERS IN MUFTI ETC COULD BE

(II) THE LAWS OF BELIZE SHOULD APPLY:

(III) THE ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE REVIEWED AFTER 15 YEARS. BUT CABINET WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER EXTENDING THIS PERIOD TO THE END OF THE CENTURY IF PRESSED.

(IV) GUATEMALA SHOULD HAVE SPECIAL RIGHTS OF USE IN A HALF-MILE STRIP OF SEA AROUND THE CAYES. IF PRESSED, CABINET WOULD AGREE TO NEGOTIATE UP TO ONE MILE OF SEA IF NECESSARY. FISHING RIGHTS WOULD NOT INCLUDE COMMERCIAL FISHING.

(V) GUATEMALA SHOULD HAVE SPECIAL RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO THE CAYES THROUGH AN AREA OF SEA TO BE NEGOTIATED. THE AREA SHOULD BE AS NARROW AS IT WAS POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE.

(B) ON ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS CABINET WERE PREPARED TO GRANT

PAGE THREE RBLABCR 501 C O N F I D E N T I A L UK COMMS ONLY

GUATEMALA AN ADEQUATE PASSAGE. A CHANNEL ONE MILE WIDE WAS CONSIDERED ADEQUATE. BUT THIS COULD BE EXTENDED, IF PRESSED, UP TO A MAXIMUM OF AT, 3 MILES. THEY WERE NOT WILLING TO RE-OPEN THE QUESTION OF RENOUNCING ANY FUTURE CLAIM TO A 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA. I.E. THEY DO NOT WISH TO RECONSIDER THEIR PRESENT POSITION ON THE 'SNAKE'.

3. WHEN I ASKED PRICE IF HE THOUGHT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY IN THE BELIZE POSITION NOW TO NEGOTIATE A FINAL TREATY ON THE BASIS OF THE POSITION OUTLINED ABOVE, HE REPLIED THAT IT DEPENDED WHETHER THE GUATEMALANS ACCEPTED THAT MILITARY USE OF THE CAYES WAS NOT NEGOTIABLE. ROGERS, COURTENAY AND SHOMAN HAD NOT AGREED WITH PAYNE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE GUATEMALAN POSITION I.E. THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER A TRADE-OFF. THEY FELT THAT THE GUATEMALANS WOULD INSIST ON MILITARY USE- AND NOT MERELY AS A PRESENTATIONAL POINT. HE HOPED HE WAS WRONG. BUT IN CASE HE WAS NOT, HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED (SEE MIFT).

4. PRICE HAS NOW LEFT BELMOPAN WITH THE HONDURAN FOREIGN MINISTER SO I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PUT TO HIM HERRERA'S ACCOUNT OF CASTILLO VALDEZ'S REACTION AS OUTLINED IN GUATEMALA CITY TELNO 239 BEFORE MONDAY. BUT AS COURTENAY AND SHOMAN ARE ALSO

PAGE FOUR RBLABCR 501 C O N F I D E N T I A L UK COMMS ONLY
OUT OF THE COUNTRY, PRICE WOULD NOT IN ANY CASE BE ABLE TO GO
BEYOND THE POSITION AGREED BY CABINET. THIS SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER,
PREVENT MR RIDLEY SENDING CASTILLO VALDEZ A SUITABLY REASSURING
MESSAGE. AS YOU WILL SEE FROM THE ABOVE, THE BELIZEANS ARE
PREPARED TO GIVE THE GUATEMALANS ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS
AND, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE AT PRESENT UNWILLING TO RECONSIDER
THE 'SNAKE', THEY HAVE IN THE PAST MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD
RECONSIDER THE QUESTION IF IT BECAME A BREAKING POINT. GIVEN
GOODWILL ON BOTH SIDES, THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE REMAINING
QUESTIONS SHOULD NOT BE SETTLED TO EVERYONES SATISFACTION.

5. PRICE CERTAINLY IS WELL AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND WILL
DO HIS BEST, I THINK, TO OVERCOME THEM. HE IS CLEARLY ANXIOUS
TO REACH A SETTLEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT IF IT APPEARED
THAT THE GUATEMALANS WERE TAKING AN UNREASONABLE POSITION AND
WERE PREPARED TO BREAK OFF THE NEGOTIATIONS, HE MIGHT BE
TEMPTED TO LET THEM DO SO SINCE HE WOULD THEN AVOID THE
NECESSITY OF HAVING A REFERENDUM.

6. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, I SEE NO ADVANTAGE IN PRESSING THE
BELIZEANS TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS NOW OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE
ROOM AND AHEAD OF THE LONDON NEGOTIATIONS. THEIR POSITION IS

PAGE FIVE RBLABCR 501 C O N F I D E N T I A L UKCOMMS ONLY
NOT AN UNREASONABLE OPENING STANCE. AND IT IS FLEXIBLE. TO
PRESSURE THEM FURTHER ON THE BASIS ONLY OF HERRERA'S TALK
COULD LEAD TO A RENEWAL OF SUSPICION OF HMG'S POSITION AND WOULD,
AS INDICATED ABOVE, PROBABLY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

7. HERRERA'S ACCOUNT OF CASTILLO VALDEZ'S PRESENT THINKING IS AS
GLOOMY AND PERHAPS AS MISTAKEN AS SOME OF HIS EARLIER ACCOUNTS
(SEE, FOR INSTANCE, GUATEMALA CITY TELEGRAM NUMBER 87 OF 19
FEBRUARY). I DO NOT THINK WE NEED ASSUME, THEREFORE, THAT THE
POSITION HE DESCRIBES REPRESENTS THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION -
SUCH EVIDENCE AS WE HAVE IS THAT LUCAS AND HIS GOVERNMENT DO
NOW WANT A SETTLEMENT. HERRERA'S AIM COULD SIMPLY BE TO GAIN
FURTHER CONCESSIONS BEFORE HAVING TO FACE US AGAIN IN
LONDON.