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FM BELMOPAN

TO FCO LONDON

INFO MODUK (FOR DS11)

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S E C R E T UK COMMS ONLY

SIC TEL NO 425

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 425 OF 3 AUGUST 1981

INFO MODUK(DS11), GUATEMALA CITY, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK,
MEXICO CITY, OTTAWA

MY TELNO 405: DEFENCE GUARANTEE

1. PRICE CALLED THIS MORNING AND ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT FOLLOWING
MESSAGE TO MR RIDLEY:-

BEGINS

1. RESOLUTION PASSED BY PUP NATIONAL CONVENTION JULY 26, 1981,
RELATES SECURITY TO SETTLEMENT OF PROBLEM.
 2. WE SHALL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT ON
HEADS OF AGREEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY.
 3. THE TIME TABLE MAY NOT ALLOW FOR COMPLETING ALL PROCEDURES:
REFERENDUM IN BELIZE AND AMENDMENT TO GUATEMALA'S CONSTITUTION.
 4. WOULD REQUEST SOME ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE SOME FLEXIB-
ILITY IN THE TIME TABLE TO ALLOW FOR COMPLETION OF WHOLE
PROCEDURE.
 5. IN VIEW OF OUR COMMITMENT TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO
SPEED SETTLEMENT, THE TIME TABLE SHOULD ALLOW FOR THIS.
- ENDS.

2. PRICE IS EVIDENTLY STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH HIS INNER CABINET.
HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN YOUR
TELNO PERSONAL 101 MIGHT NOT GIVE ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY. FOR EXAMPLE,
IF FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA (IN WHICH HE WAS WILLING TO
PLAY HIS PART) LOOKED LIKE PRODUCING AN AGREEMENT ABOUT NINE
MONTHS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, THE BRITISH GARRISON MIGHT, AS THINGS NOW
STOOD, BE WITHDRAWN JUST BEFORE A REFERENDUM TOOK PLACE ON SUCH A
TREATY. THIS WOULD MAKE HIS POSITION VERY DIFFICULT. HE WONDERED
IF THERE COULD NOT BE A CODICIL CONTAINING SOME KIND OF REVIEW
CLAUSE OF THE KIND BELIZE HAD SUGGESTED TO THE GUATEMALANS OVER THE
USE OF THE CAYES? HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE MORE IN LINE WITH WHAT
HE HAD ASKED FOR AND, HE THOUGHT, HAD ACTUALLY OBTAINED IN LONDON.

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/3. I EXPLAINED

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3. I EXPLAINED THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO AMEND THE SECRET CABINET MINUTE, AND THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF OUR EXTENDING AN INDEFINITE GUARANTEE OVER THE RETENTION OF THE BRITISH GARRISON. I UNDERTOOK TO REPORT HIS REQUEST.

4. QUITE APART FROM ANY DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS CABINET, PRICE IS OF COURSE FACING CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION CRITICISM OVER THE INADEQUACY OF THE DEFENCE GUARANTEE. HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE SEEN AS HAVING TAKEN HIS COUNTRY, AS HE PUT IT, QUOTE RECKLESSLY INTO INDEPENDENCE UNQUOTE. HE EVEN HINTED THIS MORNING THAT HE MIGHT CONCEIVABLY HAVE TO DELAY INDEPENDENCE IF THE DEFENCE GUARANTEE COULD NOT BE IMPROVED TO HIS COLLEAGUES' SATISFACTION. I DO NOT TAKE THIS THREAT TOO SERIOUSLY BUT IT WOULD CERTAINLY HELP IF MR RIDLEY COULD SEND PRICE A MESSAGE ASSURING HIM THAT, WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR THE CONSULTATIONS MENTIONED IN THE CABINET MINUTE, HMG WOULD OF COURSE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT BOTH THE SECURITY SITUATION AT THE TIME AND THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED TOWARDS A FINAL SOLUTION OF THE BELIZE/GUATEMALA DISPUTE. IT MIGHT ALSO HELP HIM IF WE COULD NOW INCREASE THE PERIOD MENTIONED IN THE SECRET CABINET MINUTE TO TWELVE MONTHS.

FCO PASS ALL

HENNESSY

BT

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