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NOTE OF A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO, PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO, AT CANCUN ON
21 OCTOBER AT 2000 HOURS

Present:

Prime Minister
His Excellency Mr C Tickell,
MVO
Mr. Alexander
President Lopez Portillo

Chairmanship of the Conference

President Lopez Portillo, who had been talking to Mr. Trudeau when the Prime Minister arrived, said that he had been trying to persuade the Canadian Prime Minister to take on the co-chairmanship of the Conference. Mr. Trudeau appeared somewhat reluctant to take on the task. The French and the Swedes had both expressed an interest. Mr. Trudeau would prefer to be the unanimous choice of the meeting. The Prime Minister said she thought Mr. Trudeau would make a very good Chairman. He would certainly be the choice of the majority of the participants, if not of everyone. She undertook to try to persuade Mr. Trudeau at supper later that evening to take up President Lopez Portillo's invitation.

Belize

The Prime Minister thanked President Lopez Portillo warmly for the help which the Mexican Government had given to HMG over Belize - particularly in the United Nations. The task of bringing Belize to independence could not have been completed so rapidly without Mexico's help. The fact that Mexico had been willing to give up its territorial claim on Belize had been particularly appreciated. President Lopez Portillo said that the Prime Minister had been very generous. From the Mexico point of view two conflicting principles had been involved in Belize. On the one hand Mexico had territorial rights of a historic nature in the country. On

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the other hand Mexico believed strongly in the principle of non-intervention. In the event the Mexican Government had decided to give priority to the second principle. However there were still problems with Guatemala and if Guatemala were to insist on its claims against Belize Mexico would have to do the same. The expulsion of Mexican students from Guatemala was symptomatic of the continuing difficulties. However Belize was effectively the only problem marring relations between Mexico and Guatemala. A good start towards a solution had been made. HMG's actions had therefore been of assistance to Mexico.

Sicartsa II

The Prime Minister expressed her delight at the outcome of the negotiations about Sicartsa II. She asked the President when it would be convenient for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to take place. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the signing should take place at 1030 am on Sunday 25 October in Mexico City.

Arrangements for the Conference

The Prime Minister asked whether there was any help she could offer President Lopez Portillo with the running of the Conference in the next two days. She hoped that the number of formal speeches would be limited. The more debate and discussion there was, the better. President Lopez Portillo said that he intended to deliver a speech of welcome the following morning. This would last about ten minutes. It would be followed by the interventions of other Heads of Government. He had hoped that it would be possible to alternate between the speeches of representatives of North and of South. However it now appeared that it would be necessary to draw lots to determine the order of speaking. The formal speeches would probably take up the whole of the first morning. The next three sessions would, he hoped, be taken up with discussion and debate. He would

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be looking for consensus among the participants but not for an agreement. At the end of the meeting there would be a brief resume from the co-chairmen. They would also hold a press conference. On Friday evening, the representatives of the co-chairmen would draw up, on their own responsibility, a summary document. Other participants would of course be free to hold press conferences. But they would only speak informally and on behalf of their own countries.

As regards the substance of the exchanges, the main objective would be to discuss the nature of the North/South problem and, assuming there was some measure of agreement, to analyse together possible solutions. The major areas of specific discussion would be food, energy, finance, commerce and the transfer of technology. Japan wanted to speak about the problems of food production, Mexico about energy.

President Lopez Portillo said that, following a discussion with President Reagan, he had the impression that the Americans discerned some possibilities for progress in relation to some of the problems on the agenda.

President Lopez Portillo said that he did not think the outcome of the Conference would shake the world. The Prime Minister said that this might be so but that the Conference should make possible an improved understanding among the participants. Perhaps nothing would actually be solved. But the effort to find solutions where one could had to be made. She wanted the Conference to be a great success. President Lopez Portillo said that he thought that everyone wanted the meeting to be a success. He sensed a general desire to avoid confrontation. There was no doubt that the meeting was going to prove instructive for all those involved.

The discussion ended at 2020.

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22 October 1981

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