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FM SAN JOSE 300100Z SEP 84
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 375 OF 30 SEPTEMBER
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON TEGUCIGALPA MEXICO CITY AND HAVANA

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY
SECRETARY OF STATE'S DISCUSSION WITH NICARAGUAN FOREIGN MINISTER,
D'ESCOTO.

1. D'ESCOTO SAID HE WOULD BE LEAVING FOR EUROPE IN MID-OCTOBER. THIS WOULD NOT AFFECT THE DEADLINE OF 15 OCTOBER FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS BY THE FIVE CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES ON THE CONTADORA DOCUMENTS. NICARAGUA HAD ALREADY DONE SO AND ACCEPTED THE DRAFT AS IT NOW STOOD.

2. ON THE NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS, D'ESCOTO SAID THAT THEY WOULD TAKE PLACE ON 4 NOVEMBER. THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA, SR BETANCUR, ABOUT A POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTIONS. AS A RESULT OF THESE CONVERSATIONS, THE NICARAGUANS HAD EXTENDED THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION PERIOD UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER.

3. D'ESCOTO CONTINUED THAT ARTURO CRUZ'S (THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION DEMOCRATIC COORDINADORA) CANDIDATURE HAD ORIGINATED IN WASHINGTON ONLY 4 DAYS BEFORE THE INITIAL REGISTRATION PERIOD (21 JULY 1984) WAS TO EXPIRE. CD WERE INSISTING UPON A POSTPONEMENT UNTIL 23 FEBRUARY 1985, BUT THIS PROPOSAL WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT, SINCE THE WINTER MONTHS OF DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WERE HARVEST MONTHS. MOREOVER, THE FSLN COULD NOT CONTINUE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TOWARDS THE CD WITHOUT BEING CRITICISED BY OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES WHICH HAD ALREADY REGISTERED. CRUZ WAS WASHINGTON'S CANDIDATE, BUT THE ELECTIONS WERE NOT TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON.

4. THE SECRETARY OF STATE ASKED FOR D'ESCOTO'S VIEW ON WHY THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES WERE SO CONCERNED AT THE SIZE OF THE NICARAGUAN ARMY AND THAT THE REPORTED POSSIBILITY THAT NICARAGUA MIGHT ACQUIRE MIGS. D'ESCOTO SAID THAT NICARAGUA WAS FACED WITH AGGRESSION BY UP TO 20,000 MEN TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND DIRECTED BY THE AMERICAN CIA. THE PROSPECT OF DIRECT US INTERVENTION WAS REAL.

5. THE SECRETARY OF STATE COMMENTED THAT THE NICARAGUAN PERCEPTION OF US INTENTIONS WAS NOT SHARED BY OTHERS. THERE WAS REAL CONCERN NOT ONLY IN THE US, BUT ALSO IN THE REGION, ABOUT NICARAGUAN INTENTIONS. D'ESCOTO REPLIED THAT NICARAGUA HAD GENUINELY SOUGHT A LESSENING OF TENSIONS IN THE AREA AND THIS COULD INVOLVE ARMS LIMITS. NICARAGUA HAD PUBLICLY ACCEPTED THE CONTADORA DRAFT FOR THE ACT OF PEACE AND CO-OPERATION. THE BALL WAS NOW IN OTHER PEOPLE'S COURTS.

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6. IN CONCLUSION, THE SECRETARY OF STATE FINALLY RAISED THE ISSUE OF RAY HOOKER, THE ATLANTIC COAST FSLN CANDIDATE KIDNAPPED AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER WHO HAS FOR THE SUBJECT OF REPRESENTATIONS FROM A NUMBER OF BRITISH MPS. HE ASKED IF THE NICARAGUANS HAD ANY NEWS OF MR HOOKER. D'ESCOTO REPLIED THAT HE KNEW ONLY THAT HOOKER WAS STILL IN ARDE HANDS, BUT HAD NO FURTHER KNOWLEDGE OF THE AFFAIR.

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SUMMERSCALE

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