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CLASS: SECRET
CHRG: PROG 10/25/83
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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC / SECSTATE WASHDC 7981
INFO RUEHLL / CONTADORA COLLECTIVE

SECTION 51 OF * TEGUCIGALPA 11635

EXDIS

DECAPTIONED

E.O. 12333: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, X1
SUBJECT: CONTADORA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 11635, (B) SAN SALVADOR 9201,
(C) GUATEMALA 9078

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: HEARTILY CONCUR WITH CHAVEZ MENA RECOM-
MENDATION (RIFFTEL B) THAT THERE BE NO CONTADORA
MEETING UNTIL AFTER FIRST OF THE YEAR. MEANWHILE,
RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON TAKE THE LEAD IN BEHIND-THE-
SCENES BUT ACTIVE ROLE IN FOMENTING CORE FOUR UNITY.
ONLY WE CAN DO IT. CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES ARE TOO
WEAK, DISORGANIZED AND NO MATCH FOR PRESSURES OF
CONTADORA FOUR. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY
NEED US AS COUNTERBALANCE TO CONTADORA GROUP.
END SUMMARY.

3. CHAVEZ MENA'S SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE NO CONTADORA
MEETINGS UNTIL THE NEW YEAR IS A GREAT IDEA. CORE
FOUR IS OBVIOUSLY NOT READY AND PERHAPS EXTRA TIME
WOULD ALLOW FOR A MORE COHERENT RESPONSE TO CONTADORA
PRESSURE TO MOVE TOWARDS AGREEMENTS WHICH ARE NOT IN
CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEREST. PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY WE
SEE IS THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONSISTENTLY UNIFYING ELEMENT
BETWEEN CORE FOUR COUNTRIES. CADC IS APPARENTLY DEAD
LETTER FROM COSTA RICAN POINT OF VIEW. WE'RE SURE
HONDURANS WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE IT REVIVED AND WOULD
WELCOME GUATEMALAN PARTICIPATION. BUT, AS WE UNDERSTAND
IT, COSTA RICANS WOULD BE EVEN MORE RELUCTANT THAN THEY
WERE EARLIER IN THE MONGE ADMINISTRATION. CONDECA
OBVIOUSLY HAS ITS LIMITS ALSO. IT IS PROBABLY BEST TO
LEAVE CONDECA MATTERS STRICTLY TO MILITARY CHIEFS IN
RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

4. THIS THEN BRINGS US TO POSSIBILITY OF, AT A MINIMUM,
SOME KIND OF PERMANENT "CENTRAL AMERICAN" (I.E., CORE
FOUR) CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM FOR DEALING WITH CONTADORA
PROCESS. SUCH MECHANISM IN OUR VIEW IS ABSOLUTELY
ESSENTIAL IF CORE FOUR IS TO BLUNT EFFECTIVENESS OF
MEXICAN/NICARAGUAN SALAMI SLICER. IF IT WOULD HELP
KEEP COSTA RICANS REASONABLY ON BOARD, WE BELIEVE GOV
WOULD BE AMENABLE TO COSTA RICANS CHAIRING SOME SORT

Dep of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
 Release Excise Deny Declassify
Date 6/2/98 Exemption

OF CORE FOUR CONSULTATIVE GROUP. INDEED WE THINK HONDURANS COULD BE BROUGHT TO GO ALONG WITH ANY SUCH PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER THREE.

5. BUT AS LATEST HONDURAN EFFORT TO HOST REGIONAL CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATES, PROMOTING ANY KIND OF CENTRAL AMERICAN UNITY IS DIFFICULT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL CENTRAL AMERICAN STATE. ADMITTEDLY, HONDURAN EFFORT WAS PRECIPITATE AND BY DEFINITION POORLY PREPARED. IT PROBABLY DESTROYED EXACTLY WHAT IT GOT. BUT THAT SHOULD NOT CONSOLE US. IT IS A PATHETIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE CONFUSION AND DISARRAY IN THE FRIENDLY CAMP.

6. LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, THE MOST COORDINATED ACTIONS AMONGST OUR FRIENDS HAVE COME WHEN WE PLAYED A STRONG HAND: THE JOINT DECLARATION AT PRESIDENT SUAZO'S INAUGURAL IN JANUARY 1982; THE SAN JOSE DECLARATION IN OCTOBER OF THE SAME YEAR. BUT SINCE OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR THE INITIATIVE HAS PASSED TO OTHER HANDS. IN THE DIPLOMATIC AREA AT LEAST, THE UNITED STATES AND ITS CENTRAL AMERICAN FRIENDS HAVE FALLEN INTO A REACTIVE AND PASSIVE MODE SINCE THE SAN JOSE FINAL ACT. THIS EMBASSY IS NOT REASSURED BY THE ARGUMENT THAT THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR WORRY BECAUSE CONTADORA FOUR WILL SAFEGUARD OUR KEY INTERESTS. CONTADORA IS ESSENTIALLY A MEXICAN EXERCISE AND WE SHOULDN'T KID OURSELVES ABOUT THAT. MATTERS ARE LIKELY TO GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER IN LIGHT OF VENEZUELAN POLITICAL PROCESS.

7. SO QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHETHER WE, IN CONCERT WITH THE CORE FOUR, CAN DO ANYTHING TO REGAIN INITIATIVE WE HAD A YEAR AGO. WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A GIVEN THAT NO COUNTRY IS GOING TO EMERGE AS NATURAL LEADER OF CORE FOUR. ONLY USG CAN PROVIDE NECESSARY COHESION. BUT FOR THIS TO HAPPEN WE MUST SHIFT SOMEWHAT FROM STRIKING A POSE OF IMPARTIALITY TO AND ALOOFNESS FROM COURSE OF CONTADORA PROCESS TO A MORE ACTIVIST ROLE. COULD THERE BE ANOTHER SAN JOSE ACT? PERHAPS THIS TIME WITH SECRETARY SHULTZ IN ATTENDANCE? ALTERNATIVELY, COULD THE SECRETARY MEET IN SAN SALVADOR WITH THE CORE FOUR FOREIGN MINISTERS

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AS DRAMATIC ILLUSTRATION OF OUR SUPPORT AND TO URGE
SYSTEMATIC CORE FOUR CONSULTATION ON CONTADORA MATTERS
THEREAFTER? PERHAPS WE COULD BRING THE DOMINICANS AND
JAMAICANS BACK INTO THE PROCESS AFTER THEIR UNCERE-
MONIOUS EXCLUSION FROM CONTADORA PROCESS. IN SHORT,
PERHAPS WE COULD USE OPPORTUNITY OF SECRETARY'S
WILLINGNESS TO CONSULT WITH REGIONAL CHIEFS OF MISSION
TO ALSO FOMENT SORELY NEEDED UNITY OF EFFORT BETWEEN
US AND THOSE WITH WHOM WE HAVE CLOSEST IDENTITY OF
VIEWS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

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3. WHILE IT MAY BE REASONABLE TO HOPE THAT SOME DAY
CORE FOUR WILL BE CAPABLE OF EFFECTIVE CONCERTED
ACTION WITHOUT OUR INVOLVEMENT OR SUPPORT, WE BELIEVE
THAT AN ACTIVE USG ROLE, WHETHER VISIBLE, BEHIND-THE-
SCENES OR SOME COMBINATION OF BOTH, IS ESSENTIAL AT
THIS TIME. NEGROPONTE

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