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ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 162344Z DEC 83
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC / SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9197
INFO RUEHLL / CONTADORA COLLECTIVE
BT

CLASS: SECRET
CHRG: PROJ 12/16/83
APPRV: AMB:JDNEGROPONTT
DREFD: AMB:JDN:MN
CLEAR: DCM:SLOWMAN
DISTR: AMB DCM POL

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INFO: 12358: DECL: QADR *
TAGS: PREL, X
SUBJECT: CONTADORA DEVELOPMENTS

1. ~~TEGUCIGALPA 13843~~ - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: CONTADORA PROCESS APPEARS TO BE HEADED IN DIRECTION THIS EMPASSY HAS BEEN FORECASTING FOR SOME TIME. WE ARE BEING END-PLAYED. WE BELIEVE GREATER PUBLIC AWARENESS OF INADEQUACIES OF NICARAGUAN POSITION IS NECESSARY. ALSO, SUGGEST SERIOUS EFFORT BE PUT BEHIND HONDURAN IDEA OF WORKING GROUPS AS MOST LOGICAL NEXT STEP. FINALLY, RECOMMEND USG PLAY MORE ACTIVE PUBLIC ROLE IN SUPPORT OF CORE FOUR IN LIGHT OF LATTER'S WEARINESS AND FACT THAT CONTADORA ARE GANGING UP ON THEM. END SUMMARY.

3. STEVEN KINZER'S DECEMBER FIFTEEN NEW YORK TIMES PIECE, ENTITLED "HONDURAS SAID TO SNAG LATIN PEACE BID", BRINGS US TO WHERE WE HAVE FEARED CONTADORA PROCESS WAS LEADING FOR SOME TIME. IN SHORT, OUR CONCERN HAS BEEN THAT CONTADORA GROUP WOULD BE DOMINATED BY MEXICAN THINKING AND THAT THROUGH SERIES OF MANEUVERS AND TACTICS CONTADORA WOULD PRESS CORE FOUR TO ACCEPT NICARAGUAN STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH AND FAILING THAT WOULD ASK TO PAINT HONDURAS, AND BY IMPLICATION USG, AS OBSTACLE TO PEACE IN REGION RATHER THAN NICARAGUA. THIS TACTIC IS NOW OBVIOUSLY BEGINNING TO BEAR SOME FRUIT AS EVIDENCED BY KINZER ARTICLE AND REACTION OF SOME OF OUR RECENT CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS.

4. A NUMBER OF STEPS MAY BE CALLED FOR AT THIS JUNCTUPE. FIRST OF ALL, IT IS NOT CLEAR TO US THAT WE HAVE SUFFICIENTLY EXPLAINED PUBLICLY THE COMPLEXITIES OF REACHING A COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ACCORD OR THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE VERIFICATION AND SIMULTANEOUS IMPLICATION. NOR HAVE WE DETAILED THE INADEQUACIES OF THE FOUR NICARAGUAN PEACE TREATIES WHICH, AFTER ALL, MUST BE TAKEN AS THEIR LAST OFFICIAL POSITION. (SEE TEGUCIGALPA 12297 FOR EMBASSY ANALYSIS OF THE INADEQUACIES OF NICARAGUA'S DRAFT TREATIES. (SLIGHTLY SANITIZED VERSION MIGHT BE SUITABLE FOR PUBLIC EXPOSITION.) INSTEAD, WE HAVE ALLOWED IMPRESSION TO DEVELOP THAT VARIOUS VARIOUS SANDINISTA

Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Graffeld, Dir
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EMANATIONS SUBSEQUENT TO THE TABLING OF THOSE DRAFTS REPRESENT SOME CONCRETE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN NICARAGUA'S POSITION. LINZER STORY MENTIONED ABOVE AND SMALL LOCAL PRESS ITEM APPEARING IN DECEMBER SIXTEEN LA PRENSA TO EFFECT THAT CONTADORA GROUP HAS NOW GIVEN US AN ULTIMATUM TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT CONTADORA WOULD APPEAR TO SUGGEST THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO BE MORE EXPLICIT AND DETAILED IN THE PUBLIC ELABORATION OF OUR POSITION. WE CAN NO LONGER ADEQUATELY EXPRESS OUR POSITION BY HIDING BEHIND THE CONTADORA SHIELD.

5. ANOTHER SUGGESTION IS THAT WE GIVE THOUGHT AS TO HOW TO HELP CORE FOUR MAKE HONDURAN IDEA OF WORKING GROUPS A REALITY. IF NICARAGUA AND CONTADORA GROUP ARE REALLY INTERESTED IN MORE DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS WHICH GO TO THE BOTTOM OF THE REGION'S PROBLEMS, WHAT BETTER WAY THAN TO FORM, SAY, FOUR WORKING GROUPS - ONE POLITICAL, ONE MILITARY, ONE ECONOMIC AND ONE FOR VERIFICATION?

6. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, THE ROOT OF OUR PROBLEM WITH CONTADORA REMAINS THE FACT THAT THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES ARE NOT RPT NOT HONEST BROKERS. THEY HAVE TAKEN SIDES. THIS STATEMENT MAY BE TRUE IN DIFFERING DEGREES FOR DIFFERENT CONTADORA COUNTRIES, BUT THE PLAIN TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT MEXICO HAS BEEN PERMITTED TO DRIVE THE PROCESS, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY PLAYING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE ADVISOR TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT. THE CORE FOUR, ESPECIALLY HONDURAS, HAVE ALWAYS PINNED THEIR HOPES ON VENEZUELA'S SERVING AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO MEXICO COMPLEMENTED BY THE USG'S SUPPORTING CORE FOUR UNITY BEHIND THE SCENES. THINGS DO NOT SEEM TO BE WORKING OUT THAT WAY.

7. WE BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN TOO RELUCTANT TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE PUBLICLY. AS WE HAVE REPEATEDLY NOTED, THE UNITED STATES' SUPPORT OF THE CONTADORA PROCESS IS TOO OFTEN INTERPRETED AS SUPPORT FOR THE POSITIONS ESPOUSED BY THE CONTADORA NATIONS. WE AND

OUR FRIENDS ARE IN A NEGOTIATION WITH A MARXIST GOVERNMENT, NOT WITH THE CONTADORA MARIO S. IN OTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS, THE CONGRESS AND AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT AGREEMENTS CANNOT BE BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST BUT MUST BE DETAILED, VERIFIABLE AND ENFORCEABLE. THE PUBLIC IS SIMPLY NOT THINKING ABOUT CONTADORA IN THESE TERMS. WE FEAR THAT IF THE PRESENT TRENDS CONTINUE UNCHECKED THAT THE HONDURANS WILL EITHER FIND THEMSELVES ACCEPTING AN UNWISE AGREEMENT OR THE NICARAGUANS WILL SUCCEED IN LAYING THE BLAME FOR A FAILED CONTADORA AT HONDURAS FEET. LATTER OUTCOME COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, ESPECIALLY NECESSARY IN ABSENCE OF A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE REGIONAL POLITICAL SOLUTION.

8. AT ISSUE HERE IS THE QUESTION OF "WHO IS THE REAL OBSTACLE TO PEACE"? WE CAN THINK OF NO BETTER TACTIC BY THE COMMUNISTS IN 1984 THAT TO TRY AND PORTRAY THE USG AND ITS FRIENDS AS THE REAL OBSTACLE TO PEACE, BE IT IN CENTRAL AMERICA OR ELSEWHERE. IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING PAINTED INTO THIS CORNER, WE CANNOT ENTRUST THE DEFENSE OF OUR POSITION TO OTHER COUNTRIES. NEGROPONTE

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