

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

1515
P

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

FROM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

1515

E.O. ~~12958~~
TAGS:
SUBJECT:

12065: XDS 7/28/02 (NEGROPONTE, John D.) OR-M
PEPR, MILLI, PINR, HO, NU
HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER SITUATION

6228

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO: AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

~~SECRET~~ TEGUCIGALPA 6 2 2 8

EXDIS

DECAPTIONED

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT
2. SUMMARY: GOH military is concerned by intelligence gap regarding location of Nicaraguan tanks and artillery.

Hondurans also fear increased likelihood of cross-border incidents mounted by Sandinista People's Army (EPS). As of now, GOH forces are ⁱⁿ intermediate ("grey") state of alert. GOH believes most important measure to be taken at this time is to intensify intelligence coverage of Nicaraguan deployments and intentions. Based on July 28 conversation with Honduran CINC General Gustavo Alvarez, Embassy does not rpt not believe Honduran regular forces are contemplating any pre-emptive military action or other form of provocation

AMB
DCM
POL-2

cc to DHC
+ M298
etc.

DRAFTED BY:
AMB:JDNegroponte:kjl

DRAFTING DATE
7-28-82

TEL. EXT.
211

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY:
AMB:JDNegroponte

CLEARANCES:

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
UNCLASSIFIED
CLASSIFICATION

OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1975
Dept. of State

50153-101

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Release (X) Excise () Deny () Declassify
Date 6/2/98 Exemption 1.5(c)

against Nicaragua. Hondurans remain very preoccupied over USG intentions in event of conventional attack by Nicaraguan forces, maintaining that GOH's own strategy and tactics very dependent on knowledge of whether or not we would be standing by if and when the balloon goes up. Ambassador has counselled restraint to General Alvarez in face of current situation and emphasis on GOH's essentially peaceful, defensive and democratic posture. END SUMMARY.

3. [] Ambassador met for one hour morning July 28 with Honduran CINC Gustavo Alvarez to review current Honduran/Nicaraguan border situation. Alvarez opened meeting by saying he was concerned over a report he had just received that Nicaraguans were rationing gas and engaged in other war/ ^{preparations.} ~~preoccupations~~ According to this same source there were three Cuban flights a day now bringing in war materials to Managua, including anti-aircraft equipment. Alvarez was also very worried about our inability to get a recent fix on Nicaraguan tanks and artillery. He was fearful that these items were being moved towards the Honduran border. We all agreed on the importance of maximizing our information on current Nicaraguan deployments and intentions.

1.5 (e)

4. Conversation quite naturally led to discussion of GOH intentions in face of current situation. Ambassador observed that he had heard reports to effect GOH might be considering some sort of pre-emptive action against Nicaragua. Alvarez responded by saying that he could not rule out some sort of pre-emptive action in the event the prospect of a conventional attack from Nicaragua became ~~XXXXX~~ absolutely clear and if Hondurans knew that it could not count on a USG response. If Hondurans could be confident of USG support in the face of an overt Nicaraguan attack, then Honduras could afford luxury of allowing aggression to become more clear-cut before responding. Alvarez asked to know (as he has so many times before) what our intentions would be in case of such a Nicaraguan aggression.

5. Ambassador responded that Alvarez seemed to be pursuing a somewhat risky line of reasoning. First, what conceivable Honduran interest could be served by taking any pre-emptive action? Honduras would undermine its own case as the aggrieved party and conceivably diminish prospects for the very USG/international support it would wish under the circumstances. As for USG response under various contingencies, Ambassador expressed admiration for Alvarez' decisive and clear-cut fashion of thinking things through, but expressed doubt that we could give

similarly clear-cut ~~responses~~ replies to his hypothetical questions. Nonetheless, Ambassador pointed out that, on basis of discussions during Doctor Suazo's visit to Washington and President Reagan's own statement on White House lawn, USG was becoming increasingly supportive in Honduras' time of increasing difficulty. How this support translated into specific actions would depend on the circumstances of the situation.

6. Conversation then turned to more immediate matters. Alvarez assured the Ambassador that Honduran military was not rpt not cooking up anything alarmist or provocative at the moment. Instead, Armed Forces are in an intermediate alert status (logical under the circumstances) and units on border with Nicaragua are on full alert. No rpt no additional units have been sent to southern border with Nicaragua. Alvarez agreed with Ambassador that ^{it} ~~is~~ was important for Honduras to maintain calm and defensive posture and avoid contributing to alarmist atmosphere.

7. COMMENT: Embassy believes it essential for Washington to maximize intelligence effort on Nicaraguan deployments and intentions. The more information and analysis we are able to provide, the more measured and rational the likely Honduran response. Likewise, while recognizing that we cannot define in advance our response to various

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
Classification

possible contingencies with the precision desired by Alvarez, Embassy repeats its earlier recommendations for consideration of joint logistics and/or contingency planning with GOH as part of effort to assuage Honduran anxieties in regard to what we would do in event of a conventional Nicaraguan attack.

8. Department please repeat military addressees as desired.

NECOPONTE
NECOPONTE

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
Classification UNCLASSIFIED