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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 15 OF 14 JANUARY 1985

INFO WASHINGTON, MEXICO CITY, TEGUCIGALPA, PANAMA CITY, CARACAS,
BOGOTA, HAVANA, UKMIS NEW YORK

NICARAGUA: VISIT OF MR KINNOCK

1. MR NEIL KINNOCK VISITED NICARAGUA FROM 8 TO 12 JANUARY AS GUEST OF THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT AND ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT ORTEGA ON 10 JANUARY. IN THE COURSE OF HIS STAY HE HAD MEETINGS WITH FIDEL CASTRO DURING THE EARLY HOURS OF 12 JANUARY, DANIEL ORTEGA ON 11 JANUARY, COMANDANTES WHEELOCK, ARCE, CARRION AND RUIZ AND NUMEROUS OTHER GOVERNMENT FIGURES, INCLUDING VICE FOREIGN MINISTER NORA ASTORGA. HE ALSO MET A GROUP OF GHR VOLUNTEERS AND ATTENDED A COCKTAIL IN HIS HONOUR AT THE EMBASSY ON 8 JANUARY, WHERE HE TALKED TO COMANDANTE WHEELOCK AMONGST OTHERS. MR KINNOCK ALSO CALLED ON THE OPPOSITION PAPER 'LA PRENSA' WHERE HE WAS RECEIVED BY THE PAPER'S EDITOR JAIME CHAMORRO AND VIOLETA CHAMORRO, THE WIFE OF THE MURDERED PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO. HE DROPPED THE IDEA OF A MEETING WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EPISCOPATE, BUT SAW A JESUIT PRIEST OF SANDINISTA PERSUASION.

2. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN PRESS REPORTS OF KINNOCK'S STATEMENTS. (WE ARE ALSO SENDING TRANSLATION OF LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE IN RESPONSE TO YOUR TELNO 43 TO MEXICO CITY). SPEAKING TO OWEN ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM MANAGUA AIRPORT, KINNOCK SAID THAT HIS VISIT HAD BEEN MOST USEFUL AND HE INTENDED TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS IN NICARAGUA CLOSELY. HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENTS CASTRO AND ORTEGA (BOTH OF 1 AND 1/2 HOURS DURATION) HAD CONCENTRATED ON REGIONAL PEACE EFFORTS AND ESPECIALLY ON THE CONTADORA PROCESS. SPEAKING TO BBC JOURNALISTS, HE SAID THAT US SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRAS WAS 'UNFORGIVABLE', THAT NICARAGUA WAS A NASCENT DEMOCRACY AND SHOULD BE GIVEN A FAIR CHANCE AND THE UK SHOULD TRY TO EXERT INFLUENCE ON THE US THROUGH ITS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT COUNTRY TO DISCOURAGE INTERVENTION WHICH WOULD BE A 'DISASTER' AND A 'SELF-LACERATION FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY'. THE UK SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR CONTADORA AS EXPRESSED AT THE COMMUNITY'S MEETING IN DUBLIN IN DECEMBER.

3. IN THE COMPANY OF MANY OTHER PROMINENT VISITORS TO NICARAGUA FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION, KINNOCK SIGNED THE 'DECLARATION OF MANAGUA', EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION AND FOR EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO THE REGION. ENGLISH TEXT OF THIS FOLLOWS IN BAG.

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4. COMMENT. KINNOCK HAD AN EXTREMELY FULL PROGRAMME AND APPEARED GENUINELY PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT, GIVEN ALSO THE PUBLICITY IT ATTRACTED. APART FROM THE CALL ON LA PRENSA, ARRANGED BY US, ALL APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT. HIS INTERPRETER, WHO PLAYED AN INFLUENTIAL PART, WAS A BRITISH SANDINISTA SYMPATHISER. INEVITABLY, HIS VIEW OF NICARAGUA WAS VERY ONE-SIDED, BUT HE ACQUIRED WHAT HE NO DOUBT BELIEVES WILL BE VALUABLE AMMUNITION FOR CASTIGATING THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, AND FOR CRITICISING WHAT HE PERCEIVES TO BE HMG'S ASSOCIATION WITH REAGAN POLICIES.

SUMMERSCALE

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