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E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: COE, XK
SUBJECT: DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE REGIONAL COLLOQUY IN SAN
JOSE

1. SUMMARY: PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE SIX CENTRAL
AMERICAN COUNTRIES, EUROPE, CANADA, AND THE UNITED
STATES MET IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, FEBRUARY 6-7, TO
ADDRESS PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION. THE
COLLOQUY ISSUED A CALL FOR INCREASED REGIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL (EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN) COOPERATION TO
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SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, TO
FOSTER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS, AND TO ALLEVIATE
THE DEBT BURDEN. BROAD SUPPORT FOR A DIRECTLY ELECTED
CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT WAS ALSO VOICED. PRESIDENT
ARIAS ANNOUNCED DURING THE SESSION THAT COSTA RICA WOULD
SHORTLY RATIFY THE THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT
AGREEMENT. THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS ALSO
AGREED TO SET UP A STANDING CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS FROM
ALL THEIR NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS. A SPECIAL MEETING OF
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FROM HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, COSTA

RICA, EL SALVADOR AND BELIZE WAS ALSO CONVENED DURING THE SESSION. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS LEFT THE COLLOQUY IMPRESSED WITH THE INCREASED CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY. THE TWO-DAY COLLOQUY WAS SPONSORED BY THE STRASBOURG CONFERENCE ON PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, FINLAND, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SAN JOSE COLLOQUY WAS ORGANISED BY THE STRASBOURG CONFERENCE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COSTA RICAN PARLIAMENT AND THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY (A WASHINGTON BASED NGO). THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COLLOQUY WAS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EUROPEAN, AMERICAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON REGIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT. THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE COLLOQUY WILL BE ANALYSED AND PUBLISHED. FURTHER COMMENTARY DEVOTED TO THE SESSION WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR THE THIRD PLENARY STRASBOURG CONFERENCE ON DEMOCARCY TO BE HELD IN STRASBOURG IN THE SPRING OF 1991.

3. THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE COLLOQUY INCLUDED A CROSS SECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS FROM ALL THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, AND SEVERAL EUROPEAN, U.S. AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS. KEY PRESENTATIONS WERE MADE BY COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT OSCAR ARIAS, COSTA RICAN ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT JOSE LUIS VALENCIANO, GUATEMALAN ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT JOSE LOBO DUBON, COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT LOUIS JUNG (FRENCH), AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION LEADER LADY ELLES (BRITISH). THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, A THREE PERSON DELEGATION FROM NICARAGUA, VIRGILIO GODOY REYES (PLI), MYRIAN ARGUELLO MORALES (CONSERVATIVE PARTY) AND RAFAEL SOLIS, SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF NICARAGUA. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS INCLUDED JACQUES BAUMEL (FRANCE RPR), DORIS MORF (SWISS SOCIALIST), GUNTHER MULLER (GERMAN CDU) PIETER STOFFELEN (DUTCH LABOR), JOHN WILKINSONS (UK CONSERVATIVE), JOUKO SKINNARI (FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT), ANTONIO COIMBRA (PORTUGUESE COSIAL DEMOCRAT) AND MEPS CARLOS ROBLES PIQUER(SPAIN), AND ZAVIER RUBERT DE VENTOS (SPAIN). CANADA WAS REPRESENTED BY MPS TERRY CLIFFORD, MAURICE FOSTER AND JEAN-PIERRE BLACKBURN. THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION INCLUDED JAMES SCHEUER (DNY), BOB LIVINGSTON (RLOUISINIA) AND BEN BLAZ (RGUAM).

4. PRESIDENT ARIAS OPENED THE COLLOQUY WITH A STIRRING CALL FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN THE REGION. HE STRESSED COSTA RICA'S COMMITMENT TO THE ESQUIPULAS PEACE PLAN AND CALLED ON THE EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA TO PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT COSTA RICA WOULD SOON RATIFY THE

CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT AGREEMENT.
5. THE COLLOQUY WAS DEVOTED TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT
IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROGRESS AND OBSTACLES. THE
DISCUSSION FOCUSED PRINCIPALLY ON THE GROWTH OF
DEMOCRACY, PARTICULARLY IN GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR,
ITS FRAGILITY, AND THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY. EACH
SPEAKER IN TURN SUGGESTED THAT EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE, BUT ALLOW THE CENTRAL AMERICAN'S TO RESPOND TO THEIR OWN POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS. DEBT ALLEVIATION WAS CITED SEVERAL TIMES AS A CONCRETE MEASURE TO SUPPORT CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY REMAINED SUBTHEMES THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSIONS. SEVERAL SPEAKERS ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF GREATER REGIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION. DEMOCRACY IS STILL FRAGILE IN MOST OF CENTRAL AMERICA, SAID GUATAMALAN ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT JOSE LOBO DUBON. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES ARE LACKING OR WEAK, AND PUBLIC COMMITMENT NEEDS REINFORCING. DEMOCRACY HAS TO SHOW RESULTS, HE SAID, OR IT FAIL. THE MOST IMPORTANT TEST IS WHETHER DEMOCRACY CAN PROVIDE GREATER ECONOMIC WELLBEING TO THE REGION'S INHABITANTS. HIS COLLEAGUE, ALFONSO ALONSO, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION. SUCH COOPERATION WOULD REINFORCE DEMOCRACY IN EACH COUNTRY, HE SAID. THE FIRST STEP SHOULD BE REALIZATION OF THE DIRECTLY ELECTED CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT. HE CALLED ON EUROPE TO ENCOURAGE THESE EFFORTS.

6. EL SALVADOR CONGRESS PRESIDENT SIGIFREDO OCHOA RECALLED THE SACRIFICES MADE IN ATTAINING DEMOCRACY IN HIS COUNTRY. HE NOTED THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE ARMED FORCES HAD TO PLAY IN BOTH ACHIEVING AND PRESERVING DEMOCRACY. HE PRAISED HIS OWN ARMED FORCES FOR ITS "COMPLETE NEUTRALITY" REGARDING UPCOMING ELECTIONS. HE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION COULD BE ACHIEVED IN HIS REGRETTED THE FMLN DECISION TO BOYCOTT THESE ELECTIONS. PEACE AND RECONCILIATION COULD BE ACHIEVED IN HIS COUNTRY IF THE FMLN WOULD RECOGNISE THAT ELECTIONS WERE THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE POWER, HE SAID. THE U.S. AND EUROPE SHOULD RESPECT THE OUTCOME OF THESE SLECTIONS, WHOEVER WINS, HE SAID.

7. NICARAGUAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARY RAFAEL SOLIS, AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY SECRETARY MYRIAN ARCUCILLO MORALES ALSO SPOKE. MRS. ARGUELLO TOLD THE COLLOQUY THAT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAD VIEWED THE AUGUST 1987 PEACE ACCORDS WITH HOPE. BUT DECEPTION RAPIDLY SET IN, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE ARREST OF OPPOSITION LEADERS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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1988. TRUE DEMOCRACY COULD ONLY BE ESTABLISHED IN HER COUNTRY THROUGH NATIONAL DIALOGUE, SHE SAID. THE SOURCE OF NICARAGUA'S PROBLEMS WERE POLITICAL, SHE SAID, AND A POLITICAL SOLUTION WAS NECESSARY. THERE COULD BE NO

ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS FOR NICARAGUA UNTIL POLITICAL SOLUTIONS WERE FOUND. SHE CALLED UPON THE EUROPEANS TO USE THEIR FULL INFLUENCE TO SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLITICAL DIALOGUE. ARGUELLO ALSO CALLED FOR A GREATER POLITICAL ROLE FOR WOMEN THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AMERICA.

8. SOLIS RESPONDED TO ARGUELLO. HE CLAIMED THAT THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA HAD CHANGED CONSIDERABLY FROM 1979. THERE WAS NOW AGREEMENT IN NICARAGUA THAT "WE MUST HAVE MORE DEMOCRACY," HE SAID. THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCH DEMOCRACY WERE GREATLY IMPROVED NOW THAT THERE WOULD BE PEACE. SOLIS CRITICIZED U.S. POLICY. THE U.S. "CONFRONTATION APPROACH" HAD HAD A NEGATIVE EFFECT, HE SAID. THE ESQUIPULAS AGREEMENT, HE ARGUED, PROVIDES A "POSITIVE" BASIS FOR DIALOGUE WITHIN NICARAGUA, AND IN THE REGION. HIS PARTICIPATION IN THIS COLLOQUY, HE SAID, WAS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THAT AGREEMENT. HE PREDICTED THAT NICARAGUA WOULD DEVELOP "A SCANDAVANIAN TYPE SOCIALIST POLICY." HE WELCOMED CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION WHICH REINFORCED HIS BELIEF IN A MORE OPEN SOCIALIST SYSTEM IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.

9. THE EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS RAISED EUROPE'S POSTWAR EXPERIENCE AS A MODEL FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY. THEY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION, DIALOGUE AND PEACE. EACH EUROPEAN SPEAKER PROMISED TO USE HIS FULL INFLUENCE TO INVOLVE EUROPE IN SUPPORT OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION. THERE WAS ALSO STRONG SYMPATHY FOR DEBT ALLEVIATION. MRS. MORF (SWISS) SUGGESTED THAT DEBT BE CONVERTED INTO EQUITY TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF NATIONAL PARKS AND NATURE PRESERVATIONS.

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10. COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT LOUIS JUNG
PROMISED THE COLLOQUY THAT THE RECORD AND RESULTS WOULD
BE HIGHLIGHTED DURING FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF
EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. HE ALSO STRESSED
THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED EFFORTS FOR REGIONAL
COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION THROUGH A CENTRAL AMERICAN
PARLIAMENT. FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE
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THE HALLMARK OF DEMOCRACY, HE SAID, AND HE HOPED THAT
THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS COULD PROVIDE A
MODEL FOR A SIMILAR INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKINGS IN THE
CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION.

11. THE COLLOQUY ALSO PROVIDED THE OCCASION FOR
SUPPLEMENTAL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN
PARTICIPANTS. THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FROM
HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR AND BELIZE
CONVENED A SPECIAL MEETING TO REFLECT AMONG THEMSELVES
ON CURRENT CENTRAL AMERICAN ISSUES. PARTICIPANTS IN
THIS MEETING INCLUDED JOSE LUIS VALENCIANO, RAFAEL ANGEL
CALDERON, CARLOS MANUEL CASTILLO, SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ,
JORGE SERRANO ELIAS, JORGE CARPIO NICOLLE, RAFAEL
LEONARDO CALLEJAS, AND EFRAIN DIAZ ARRIVILLAGA. THE
GROUP AGREED TO MEET AGAIN ON A REGULAR BASIS. THE
PRESIDENTS ON NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS ALSO MET BETWEEN
THEMSELVES. THEY AGREED ALSO TO GET TOGETHER ON A
REGULAR BASIS. BOTH GROUPS ISSUED STATEMENTS SUPPORTING
CREATION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT. NICARAGUAN
PARTICIPANTS DID NOT ATTEND EITHER MEETING.
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