

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Jose Azcona Hoyo of Honduras

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Jose Azcona Hoyo, President of Honduras
Interpreter: Stephanie Van Reigersberg
Notetaker: Everett Ellis Briggs

DATE, TIME July 27, 1989, 1:07 - 1:25 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office - Azcona's Office

The President, who initiated the call, began by saying, "Mr. President, how are you, sir?" (U)

President Azcona replied, "How are you, Mr. President?" (U)

The President said, "I'm doing fine. I wanted to call to say a word about the Central American Summit on August 6, if I may." (S)

President Azcona said he would be delighted. (U)

The President said we look at the Summit as presenting a critical opportunity to keep the pressure for democracy on the Sandinistas. He added that he knows that some people in President Azcona's part of the world share his view that the Sandinistas are failing to show progress on democratizing, and are discouraged by the lack of progress on conditions for truly free elections. The President expressed his hope that the democracies will demand that the Sandinistas do more, when they meet with Ortega. (S)

The President said he wished to point out something of direct concern to President Azcona, that the Sandinistas want to adopt a plan to demobilize the Resistance before the February elections, without first taking steps for real democracy. The President said that in his view, that is "clearly unacceptable." (S)

The President said that it was also his view that the plan should link demobilization of the Resistance to the establishment of safe, democratic conditions inside Nicaragua. He said that we still feel that direct talks between the Sandinistas and the Resistance are necessary to take into account the needs of the Resistance. (S)

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The President said he knows the Resistance has been a "burden" for Honduras, and that he understands this. He assured President Azcona that the U.S. government intends to provide the necessary support so that Honduras does not have to carry the burden alone. He said, "I am absolutely sure Congress will support me in this." He said he hoped we are together on this issue, and that if we can stay together on these points, this will be very important to the eventual democratization of Nicaragua. (S)

President Azcona said, "I agree with the views you have expressed. We here in Honduras have been discussing the possibilities regarding demobilization. We believe in the principle that the demobilization and repatriation must be voluntary." President Azcona said he was talking about the repatriation of the Resistance, their families, and refugees. To achieve these ends, he said, Honduras agreed that there must be consultation with the Nicaraguan Resistance. Further, he said that this consultation should be carried out in Nicaragua, based on the principle of national reconciliation and democratization, as provided for in Esquipulas II. He said Honduras also thinks there has to be a judgment made by an international or supranational organization stating that the Nicaraguan government is complying with the principles of Esquipulas II, and certifying that the conditions exist for the demobilization and repatriation of the contras. Then, he said, there would have to be support from an international commission to supervise the repatriation of these people. He added that together with the Nicaraguan government and the Resistance, the conditions would have to be established to guarantee the personal freedom and the economic and political security of the persons being repatriated. President Azcona said that this could in no way be something done in an "overly precipitous" manner. (S)

The President said, "It is good to hear you say that." The President added that we hope all of the democracies will stay united on this, that he agreed with what President Azcona had said, and considered it "very good news." What worried us, he said, was if demobilization took place before the elections and if the conditions had not been established, the Sandinistas would walk away from free elections and also democratization. (S)

President Azcona said Honduras wanted to talk about the various stages in the process and to propose the mechanisms to deal with them. First, he said, there should be an evaluation as to whether Nicaragua is complying with the commitments of Esquipulas II, Alajuela and Costa del Sol; and then, if approved, if Nicaragua is complying, then Central Americans would ask the

Secretaries General of the OAS and the UN to establish the international support and verification commission. This, he said, is going to take time. "We are going to stick to the principle that repatriation must always be voluntary," he said, adding that the Hondurans are very worried that this whole problem will linger in Honduras and continue to cause them difficulty. (S)

The President said he could identify with that. He said we want to help on the humane costs involved. He said he thought that if Nicaragua can be held to their timetable of elections, it looks as if the problem is "not forever." (S)

President Azcona said, "That is our thought as well." (U)

The President said, "It's nice talking to you." He said he would talk to the other Central American democratic presidents, while trying to not be a burden and recognizing that the key democratic leaders have the major responsibility. He said, "We do not want to impose a burden, but it is also very important to the Resistance that these people not be thrown to the wolves before the conditions are ripe for their return." (S)

President Azcona said, "Please rest assured. We would not follow any such line." (S)

The President asked President Azcona if he has any vacation plans this summer. (U)

President Azcona said he will visit New York September 2-4, to see his son who has just entered West Point. (U)

The President expressed great pleasure talking to President Azcona, who echoed the sentiment. (U)

The President and President Azcona then each said goodbye and the conversation ended. (U)

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