TELEGRAM

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RUESUZ/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9647
RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 8442

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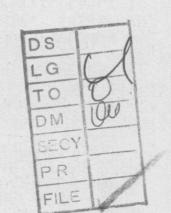
SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF ORIT

REF:

(A) BUENOS AIRES 1638, (B) EC BRUSSELS 2610, (C) CARACAS 1057, (D) OTTAWA 0271

1. SUMMARY: A WORKING COMMITTEE MET IN CARACAS LAST JANUARY TO START PREPARING FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF OR IT, NOW SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN THE SAME CITY NEXT AUGUST. ON MARCH 24 A DELEGATION OF ARGENTINA CGT LEADERS MET WITH AFL-CIO INTER-AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW MCLELLAN TO DISCUSS TERMS UNDER WHICH ARGENTINA COULD JOIN THE INTER-AMERICAN LABOR SYSTEM FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE WORKING COMMITTEE, POSSIBLY WITH ARGENTINE PARTICIPATION, WILL MEET AGAIN NEXT MONTH. A TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE CONGRESS INCLUDES (1) A PLAN TO DECENTRALIZE THE NEW ORGANIZATION BY ESTABLISHING OFFICES IN MEXICO, CARACAS, AND ARGENTINA, (2) A RECISION OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS WOULD DETERMINE THE NEW ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, (3) ELECTION OF OFFICERS, AND (4) FINANCIAL MATTERS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING WHAT RESOURCES THE NEW ORGANIZATION COULD CALL UPON. PROBLEMS ABOUND, BUT THERE

IS HOPE. END SUMMARY.



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- 3. ACCORDING TO MCLELLAN THE ONLY REAL CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE ARGENTINE ABOUT JOINING ORIT WAS THE NAME ORIT ITSELF, A SYMBOLIC BUT IMPORTANT POINT FOR THE CGT SINCE 1951, WHEN IT WAS ACCUSED OF BEING A TOOL OF A FASCIST ICTATORSHIP AND PREVENTED FROM PARTICIPATING IN ORIT'S FOUNDING CONGRESS.
- 4. THE CGT ALSO HAS A PLAN FOR THE DECENTRALIZATION OF ORIT THROUGHTHE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL OFFICE IN CARACAS, BUENOS AIRES AND MEXICO CITY. WHILE WE DON'T HAVE THE DETAILS OF THE CGT PROPOSAL WE BELIEVE IT IS SIMILAR TO ONE DISCUSSED IN THE CARACAS MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE LAST JANUARY.
- TRALIZATION PROPOSAL WILL BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA OF THE CONGRESS. BASICALLY THE IDEA IS TO DIVIDE THE COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE AMONG THREE REGIONS: MEXICO WOULD CON TINUE TO BE THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND WOULD INCLUDE CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND PUERTO RICOIN ITS IMMEDIATE JURISDICTION. CARACAS WOULD INCLUDE CENTRAL AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, AND THE ANDEAN COUNTRIES, AND BUENOS AIRES THE REST OF SOUTH AMERICA (SEE COMMENT, BELOW).

CENTEZS

- 6. ACCORDING TO MCLELLAN, THE ARGENTINES DO NOT FEEL AS STRONGLY AS THE VENEZUELANS AND THE CANADIANS ABOUT THE DESTRABILITY OF MAINTAINING CLOSE TIES TO THE ICFTU. RATHER, THEY PROFESS TO LEAN TOWARD THE POSITION OF THE AFL-CIO AND THE MEXICANS THAT ANY NEW ORGANIZATION OUGHT TO BE MORE INDEPENDENT OF THE ICFTU THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH ORIT. APPARENTLY, THE CGT'S RELATIVELY SHORT EXPERIENCE AS AN AFFILIATE OF THE ICFTU HAS RAISED SOME DOUBTS ABOUT EUROPEAN INTERVENTION IN HEMISPHERE LABOR AFFAIRS (SEE COMMENT, BELOW).
- 7. MCLELLAN HAS URGED THE CGT TO SEND OBSERVERS TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE SCHEDULED FOR MAY 31 IN MEXICO AND TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ENABLE IT TO PARTICIPATE TO THE FULLEST POSSIBLE EXTENT IN THE CONGRESS IN AUGUST. UNDER ORIT'S CONSTITUTION ALL ICFTU AFFILIATES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP. THEREFORE, MCLELLAN BELIEVES THE CGT'S APPLICATION, PARTICULARLY IF ACCOMPANIED BY A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION, WILL BE APPROVED BY AUGUST. IN ANY CASE, THE MERE PRESENCE OF CGT DELEGATES IN THE CONGRESS AS OBSERVERS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF ANY EMERGING ORGANIZATION WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON THE CONGRESS EVEN IF THEY COULD NOT VOTE.
- 8. IN GENERAL, THE ARGENTINES SEEMED, FROM THE AFL-CIO POINT OF VIEW, QUITE COOPERATIVE. OBVIOUSLY, THE UNCERTAIN

- 11. THE DECENTRALIZATIN CONCEPT IS A GOOD ONE IN THEORY BUT IT, TOO, KOULD PROVE A STUMBLING BLOCK, BOTH IN TERMS OF GETTING APPROVAL IN THE CONGRESS AND IN FUNCTIONING EFFECTIVELY AFTERWARDS. THE MEXICANS, AMERICANS, AND PROBABLY THE BRAZILIANS WOULD OPPOSE THE PLAN AS IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED, ALTHOUGH THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE VARIOUS REGIONS IS SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION BOTH BEFORE AND DURING THE CONGRESS. THE DANGER IS THAT SUCH A PLAN MIGHT RESULT IN PRACTICE IN THE CREATION OF THREE NEW LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, EACH WITH ITS OWN "SPHERE OF INFLUENCE" INSTEAD OF ONE.
- 12. MOBODY SEEMS TO THINK JULIO ETCHEVERRY, ORIT'S SECRETARY GENERAL SINCE THE LAST CONGRESS IN 1974, HAS MUCH OF A CHANCE FOR REELECTION, IN SPITE OF THE SUPPORT HE COULD EXPECT FROM THE AFL-CIO AND PROBABLY FROM THE MEXICANS.

 MUCH WILL DEPEND, OF COURSE, ON WHETHER A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE CANDIDATE IS OFFERED TO THE CONGRESS.
 - 13. FURTHER PROBLEMS HAVE TO DO WITH THE DATE AND THE COST OF THE CONGRESS ITSELF. FIDEL VELAZQUEZ OF THE MEXICAN CTM NOW SAYS THE AUGUST DATE AGREED UPON IN CARACAS TO ACCOMODATE THE CANADIANS IS UNACCEPTABLE. VELAZQUEZ HAS NOT GIVEN ANY REASON WE KNOW OF, BUT IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT HE IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE DECENTRALIZATION PROPOSAL. PERHAPS HE SEES THE PROPOSAL AS A MOVE TO DIMINISH MEXICO'S INFLUENCE IN ANY NEW HEMISPHERE LABOR ORGANIZATION.
 - 14. AS FOR THE COST OF THE CONGRESS, THE AFL-CIO HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT DOESN'T INTEND TO PICK UP THE TAB. THE AFL-CIO POSITION AT THE PRESENT TIME IS THAT THE MAJOR COST OUGHT TO BE BORNE BY THE ICFTU AND THE VENEZUELAN CTV, WHOSE INITIATIVE IT WAS TO CALL THE CONGRESS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE AFL-CIO WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO WAIT FOR 1977, WHEN THE NEXT ORDINARY CONGRESS WAS DUE TO TAKE PLACE.

15. ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE ON THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE SCHEDULED FOR MAY IN MEXICO. HOPEFULLY AT THAT TIME THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THE PLAY WILL BE ABLE TO AGREE ON THE BASIS FOR A CONGRESS WHICH MAY YET ACHIEVE THE IMPORTANT BUT ELUSIVE GOAL OF "REVITALIZING" THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC LABOR SYSTEM.

16. THE DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION OR COMMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH ADDRESSEE POSTS MAY CONSIDER PERTINENT. THE POSITION WHICH ORIT AFFILIATES WOULD BE LIKELY TO TAKE ON THE VARIOUS ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THIS CABLE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL. KISSINGER

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