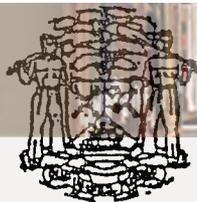




RESPUESTA
A LA NOTA
ENVIADA AL
GOBIERNO
DE BELICE



BELIZE

THE PRIME MINISTER

FA/D/18/99 (17)

14th December, 1999

His Excellency
Mr. Eduardo Stein-Barillas
Foreign Minister
Ministry of External Relations
Guatemala City
Republic of Guatemala

Excellency,

Thank you for your letter of 16th October, 1999, which has been carefully studied by my government.

I find it very reassuring that we continue to share the desire to maintain and indeed improve the good relations that exist between our two countries and peoples and the determination to find a solution to any differences we may have in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Organization that require the peaceful settlement of disputes.

While Your Excellency will appreciate that my government does not share the version of history nor the interpretation of certain international instruments that are expressed in your letter, I think you will agree that it is undesirable to enter into a debate on those matters in this exchange of letters.

I would rather wish to stress our joint desire to seek a peaceful and satisfactory solution to our differences and to continue to cooperate in matters that are beneficial for both our peoples.

Like yourself, we lament the fact that certain incidents have occurred which have caused suffering to citizens of both our countries, and we certainly intend to continue to promote the greatest possible collaboration between our respective authorities in order to prevent these incidents where possible and otherwise to ameliorate their consequences.

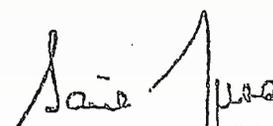
As you rightly point out, Resolution 35/20 of the XXXV Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 11th November, 1980 (which you will recall was endorsed by the Organization of American States), urged the governments involved to continue their efforts to reach an agreement. It also called upon "Guatemala and independent Belize to work out arrangements for Post Independence Cooperation on matters of mutual concern."

With regard to your specific proposal that the dispute be referred to arbitration or to judicial resolution, I think you will agree that in a spirit of working together to achieve an amicable and mutually beneficial solution, it would be premature to seek to define the means of solution before engaging in a frank and open discussion at the highest levels.

I therefore propose that a meeting of Heads of Government of our two countries be celebrated at a time that is mutually convenient. At this meeting, each side may put forward proposals for reaching a settlement, including those you mention in your letter. Should the esteemed President of the Republic of Guatemala agree to this proposal, we can immediately assign our respective representatives to prepare the ground for this meeting, which we have every expectation will proceed in the spirit of amity and conciliation that has always characterized our relations.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,


HON. SAID W. MUSA
PRIME MINISTER

MINISTER OF FINANCE & FOREIGN AFFAIRS