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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TO: P - Walter J. Stoessel, Jr.
FROM: ARA - Tom Enders
SUBJECT: Your Luncheon for President Jose Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador, 12:30 pm, September 21, at the State Department - Scope Paper

SUMMARY

You have agreed to host, as Acting Secretary, a luncheon for President Duarte and members of his delegation following his call on President Reagan. Immediately before the luncheon you will meet privately with Duarte for fifteen minutes. We intend the luncheon to be an opportunity for a frank, informal dialogue. We wish to use the occasion to reassure Duarte of our support for his government and to discuss a few points of mutual interest.

During his four-day stay in Washington, most of Duarte's time will be spent with Congress and the media to build support for his government. A copy of his schedule is attached.

I. OBJECTIVES

1. To reassure Duarte of our firm support for his government and the electoral process he has initiated.
2. To encourage Duarte to broaden support for the civilian-military government, domestically and internationally.
3. To discuss how we can best help the Salvadoran government pursue the war against the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas.
4. To impress upon Duarte the importance of taking firm steps to control acts of violence against non-combatants.

[redacted]
GDS 9/18/87

Department of State IS/FPG/CDR El Salvador SF Date 9/20/93
Declassified under EO 12356 (X) in full; () in part;
portions withheld: classified (); deliberative ();
law enforcement (); privacy (), statutory ();
not relevant to El Salvador ().

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II. PARTICIPANTS

Pre-Luncheon Meeting

US

Acting Secretary Stoessel
ARA Deputy Assistant Secretary
Stephen Bosworth
ARA/CEN Deputy Director
Arthur Giese
P, Ken Brill

EL SALVADOR

President Jose Napoleon Duarte
Foreign Minister Fidel Chavez Mena
Ambassador Ernesto Rivas Gallont

Luncheon

(see attached list)

III. SETTING

This is Duarte's first visit to the US since he became President of El Salvador's Revolutionary Governing Junta in December 1980.

IV. DISCUSSION OF OBJECTIVES

1. To reassure Duarte of our firm support for his government and the electoral process it has initiated.

We strongly support the Duarte government as the best, indeed probably the only hope, for a peaceful moderate solution to El Salvador's political problems. President Duarte has announced plans for election of a Constituent Assembly in March 1982. This is a key step in enhancing the government's legitimacy and undermining support for the guerrillas. Duarte has invited all groups to participate in elections, but will not negotiate with groups engaged in armed struggle. There are many pitfalls ahead. The guerrillas remain committed to derailing the elections by force and intimidation. The economy is in its third straight year of sharp decline.

TALKING POINTS

-- COMPLIMENT DUARTE ON HIS SUPERB HANDLING OF A VERY DIFFICULT AND PERSONALLY DANGEROUS ROLE.

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-- WE UNDERSTAND YOUR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE POSED BY THE GUERRILLAS AND WILL BE AS HELPFUL AS WE CAN WITHIN OUR OWN BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS.

-- WE STRONGLY SUPPORT YOUR ELECTION INITIATIVE. IT IS WITHOUT DOUBT THE BEST WAY TO ISOLATE THE GUERRILLAS, BOTH IN EL SALVADOR AND INTERNATIONALLY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO COOPERATING WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THE ELECTIONS A SUCCESS, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR RECENT CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.

2. To encourage Duarte to broaden support for the civilian-military government, domestically and internationally.

The Salvadoran government needs to broaden its base, both at home and abroad. The upcoming elections present the best opportunity for the Salvadorans to isolate the insurgents. Domestically, Duarte's Christian Democratic Party has been engaged in a dialogue with business leaders in bringing the private sector into the government. Internationally, the Salvadoran government receives mixed support. The recent French-Mexican communique recognizing the FMLN-FDR as a legitimate political force is not helpful, although it has been overwhelmingly rejected by the Latin Americans. The FMLN-FDR is now lobbying its international supporters to use the French-Mexican communique as a lever to raise the El Salvador issue in the UN.

TALKING POINTS

-- WE HOPE THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR WILL CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF WORKING OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES.

-- LATIN AMERICAN REBUTTAL TO THE FRENCH-MEXICAN COMMUNIQUE WAS ENCOURAGING. WE EXPRESSED OUR DISPLEASURE PRIVATELY TO FRANCE AND MEXICO IN STRONG TERMS.

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-- HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO HEAD OFF EFFORTS TO RAISE THIS ISSUE IN THE UN? SHOULD WE PURSUE OAS INITIATIVE TO PREEMPT UNGA CONSIDERATION?

3. To discuss how we can best help the Salvadoran government pursue the war against the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas.

In the past several weeks, the Salvadoran guerrillas have mounted an intensified offensive, complicating the already precarious situation of the Duarte government. The guerrillas' new strategy has focused on sabotaging vulnerable economic targets and engaging in harassment attacks against carefully selected targets to minimize their own losses. The guerrillas have taxed the government's ability to restore and maintain electrical power, particularly in the eastern third of the country. Ambushes along the main roads have increased government casualties. In addition, the guerrillas succeeded in occupying the Salvadoran town of Perquin near the Honduras border for more than a week before being driven out by government troops. These tactics have enabled the guerrillas to further damage the already crippled Salvadoran economy, weaken military morale, and enhance their international and domestic prestige. While these developments are troublesome, the guerrilla-military balance of strength does not appear to have changed, with neither side having the capacity for military victory.

We responded quickly to the Salvadoran government's request for emergency help by sending four additional helicopters and forty-seven portable generators. We are examining how we can help the Salvadorans repair quickly the 200 electrical towers sabotaged by the guerrillas. We have also sent a military strategy assessment team to San Salvador to examine how we can be more helpful over the longer term.

TALKING POINTS

- ASK DUARTE'S ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE WAR IS GOING.
 - ASK WHAT PRIORITY ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED.
4. To impress upon Duarte the importance of taking firm steps to control acts of violence against non-combatants.

Right wing extremist elements opposed to reforms are conducting a campaign of indiscriminate terrorism to undermine

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the government. Accounts of atrocities committed against non-combatants by right wing "death squads" and elements of the security forces continue to sap the government's domestic and international support. Two cases of particular importance are:

-- the murders in December 1980 of four American churchwomen. Six National Guardsmen suspects have been under detention since May. The evidence against them is compelling.

-- the murders of two American AIFLD advisors and a Salvadoran land reform official in January 1981. Two suspects are under detention. Salvadoran businessman Ricardo Sol Mesa is being held in El Salvador. His alleged accomplice, Hans Christ, is being held in Miami awaiting a hearing on El Salvador's extradition request. A Salvadoran judge has recommended to the Supreme Court that Sol Mesa be freed and the Christ extradition request be dropped for lack of evidence.

The release of the suspects in either of these cases will generate serious concern in the US and erode political support for our El Salvador policy. Duarte is aware of the problem (he himself was once a victim of torture by the military), but thus far has been ineffective in confronting the armed forces or curtailing their excess. The Commander of the National Guard, Colonel Vides Casanova, will be attending the luncheon. Since the National Guard is suspected of perpetrating a number of offenses, it will be useful to raise this issue in his presence.

TALKING POINTS

-- ACCOUNTS OF ATROCITIES GENERATE AN INTENSE REACTION IN THE US PRESS AND CONGRESS. THIS SERIOUSLY THREATENS PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR YOUR GOVERNMENT.

-- THERE ARE PARTICULARLY STRONG EMOTIONS AMONG US CHURCH AND LABOR GROUPS ON THE CHURCHWOMEN AND AIFLD MURDERS.

-- TO PROTECT YOUR OWN INTERESTS YOU MUST CRACK DOWN ON THESE FORMS OF VIOLENCE, BRINGING THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO JUSTICE.

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Attachments:

1. Luncheon Guest List
2. Luncheon Scenario
3. Suggested Luncheon Toast
4. Duarte Schedule
5. Biographies of Salvadoran Officials

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