

El Salvador

FM FOO 251730Z APRIL 1982
TO PRIORITY CERTAIN MISSIONS AND DEPENDENT TERRITORIES
TEL NO GUIDANCE NUMBER 78 OF 26 APRIL 1982

WIPGT: EL SALVADOR

BACKGROUND (FOR USE WITH TRUSTED CONTACTS ONLY)

1. INSTEAD OF GIVING GREATER SUPPORT FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY LED BY PRESIDENT DUARTE, AS WAS WIDELY HOPED, 60 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE VOTED FOR PARTIES TO THE RIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. THESE PARTIES HAVE FORMED A COALITION LED BY MAJOR ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON OF ARENA, NOW PRESIDENT OR SPEAKER OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. AN INTERIM HEAD OF STATE HAS YET TO BE APPOINTED TO REPLACE PRESIDENT DUARTE. IT IS

UNLIKELY THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, THOUGH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES ARE CONTINUING.

2. THE PROPOSAL BY THE MEXICANS FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EXILED MODERATES OF THE SALVADOREAN LEFT AND THE GOVERNMENT MUST NOW BE REGARDED AS UNLIKELY TO BE IMPLEMENTED. GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IS CONTINUING; THOUGH GUERRILLA LEADERS WILL HAVE REALISED THAT THE TURNOUT AT THE ELECTIONS HAS UNDERMINED THEIR CLAIM TO ENJOY SUBSTANTIVE POPULAR SUPPORT. FOR THEIR PART, THE ARMED FORCES MAY LAUNCH AN INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE GUERRILLA STRONGHOLDS.

3. THE US GOVERNMENT ARE STILL CONSIDERING THEIR POSITION, BUT HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS MUST CONTINUE. THE LATTER WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED US ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR. WE RECOGNISE THE PRIMACY OF US INTERESTS IN THE AREA AND SEE NO IMMEDIATE SCOPE FOR AN EC ROLE.

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EL SALVADOR

INTRODUCTION

1. THE FINAL REPORT OF OBSERVERS APPOINTED BY HMG TO MONITOR THE SALVADOREAN ELECTIONS WAS MADE PUBLIC ON 23 APRIL. (COPIES HAVE BEEN SENT TO CERTAIN POSTS. FURTHER COPIES WILL SHORTLY BE AVAILABLE FROM HMSO). THIS MAY STIMULATE INTEREST BOTH IN THE REPORT ITSELF AND IN HMG'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS.

LINE TO TAKE

2. THE OBSERVERS' REPORT SHOWS THAT AN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH PROPORTION OF THE ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE IN EL SALVADOR-ABOUT 75 PER CENT-TURNED OUT TO VOTE DESPITE A CALL BY THE GUERRILLAS TO BOYCOTT THE ELECTIONS. THIS WAS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION THAT THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE WANT TO SEE THEIR FUTURE DECIDED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND NOT BY MILITARY MEANS. IT WAS A CONSIDERABLE MORAL SETBACK FOR THE GUERRILLAS (ALTHOUGH IS UNLIKELY TO AFFECT THEIR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT).

3. THE REPORT ALSO CONCLUDED THAT:-

A) THE SALVADOREAN ELECTORAL LAW CONTAINED SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS TO ENSURE A RESULT REFLECTING THE SENTIMENTS OF THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE.

B) THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS WAS FAIR; THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE OF INTIMIDATION, COERCION, OR BALLOT-RIGGING.

C) MOST SALVADOREANS INTERVIEWED SAID THAT THE FAILURE BY THE LEFT TO PROVIDE CANDIDATES WAS BECAUSE THEY LACKED SUPPORT, THOUGH THE FEAR OF THE LEFT FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR CANDIDATES WAS NOT WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

4. WE SEE THE ELECTIONS AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF EL SALVADOR'S PROBLEMS. WE LOOK TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO CURB HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, TO BRING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH ABUSES TO TRIAL, AND TO MAINTAIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NECESSARY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. IT IS FOR THEM TO DECIDE WHAT FORM THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND FURTHER REFORMS SHOULD NOW TAKE. BUT WE CALL ON ALL THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR TO BRING IT TO AN END AND TO HELP FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK.

BACKGROUND (TO BE USED FREELY)

5. SEE GUIDANCE TEL NO 19 OF 17 FEBRUARY.

/ 6. FOLLOWING

6. FOLLOWING A REQUEST BY THE SALVADOREAN GOVERNMENT HMG APPOINTED TWO DISTINGUISHED INDEPENDENT FIGURES, PROF. DEREK ROWETT QC, PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE AND SIR JOHN GALSWORDY KCVO, CMG, FORMER BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, TO OBSERVE THE SALVADOREAN ELECTIONS. THEY WERE ASKED TO REPORT AS THEY FOUND. OFFICIAL OBSERVERS WERE SENT BY 16 OTHER COUNTRIES AND A NUMBER OF UNOFFICIAL OBSERVERS ATTENDED. THE BRITISH OBSERVERS WERE THE FIRST TO ARRIVE AND VISITED EIGHT OF THE COUNTRY'S 14 DEPARTMENTS.

7. THE ELECTIONS HELD ON 28 MARCH WERE FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WITH THE INTENTION OF ELABORATING A CONSTITUTION IN PREPARATION FOR ELECTIONS IN 1983.

8. SEE NIPGT.

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