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10 DOWNING STREET

OD:	LCO	MOD
	(FCO)	LPS
	HMI	CDL
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		DTI

*From the Private Secretary*

28 February, 1984

EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute of 27 February. She agrees that we should send observers to the El Salvador elections and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should announce this decision in the House this week as soon as suitable candidates have been selected.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of the other members of OD.

A. J. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Prime Minister

Content that we should again  
send observers to the  
El Salvador election?

PM/84/34

A.J.C. 12/2.

PRIME MINISTER

Yes Sir.

#### El Salvador Elections

1. In March 1982 we sent two official observers to the Constituent Assembly elections in El Salvador. Our decision to do so was welcomed by the Americans and was vindicated by the useful report which they submitted.
2. Presidential elections are to take place on 25 March. We have again been invited to send observers. To do so would be consistent with our 1982 decision and the policy we have followed since then. I therefore propose to accept and to announce this in the House this week as soon as we have selected suitable candidates. As in 1982 they will be independent figures of acknowledged public standing.
3. In 1982, none of our EC partners sent observers to the constituent Assembly elections. We and the US are likely to be less isolated this time. The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg have expressed interest in a joint observer mission of the Ten. This has been blocked by France and Greece. But the Germans and possibly the Dutch may still send national observers, as might the Canadians who declined to do so in 1982.
4. There will of course be criticism in Parliament and elsewhere, as there was in 1982. The lines of our response are clear: the decision is consistent with our aim of

/encouraging



encouraging the development of democracy everywhere in Central America; the fairness or otherwise of elections ought not to be prejudged; and our observers will be there to report the facts as they find them.

5. I am copying this minute to OD colleagues.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'G. Howe', is written above the printed name.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

27 February 1984