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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 636 OF 23 FEBRUARY

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U.S./EL SALVADOR: MEDIA COVERAGE OF EUROPEAN ATTITUDES

1. THE U.S. PRESS HAS FOCUSED CLOSELY ON WEST EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS U.S. POLICY ON EL SALVADOR, IN PARTICULAR ON THEIR REACTIONS TO EAGLEBURGER'S VISIT LAST WEEK.

2. THE WASHINGTON STAR SPECULATES THAT DURING HER FORTHCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON, THE PRIME MINISTER WILL QUOTE VOICE HER GOVERNMENT'S CAUTIOUS REACTION TO THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO ENLIST EUROPEAN SUPPORT ON EL SALVADOR. BRITAIN, WHICH OPPOSES SENDING ARMS TO EITHER SIDE, MAY COUNSEL THE ADMINISTRATION TO SEEK A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION AND NOT TO RESORT TO THE MILITARY OPTION. MRS THATCHER IS EXPECTED TO WARN THAT THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS VITAL IF THE WEST IS TO REMAIN UNITED IN THE HANDLING OF EL SALVADOR UNQUOTE.

3. THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR ARGUES THAT IN MAKING EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR U.S. POLICY ON EL SALVADOR ITS FIRST TEST OF EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY, THE ADMINISTRATION RUNS THE RISK OF LOSING SUPPORT FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF NEW T N F WEAPONS IN EUROPE. THE NEWSPAPER MAINTAINS THAT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, PARTICULARLY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ONES, DO NOT WANT TO FRITTER AWAY THEIR LIMITED POLITICAL INFLUENCE OVER THEIR OWN LEFT WINGS ON THE MARGINAL AND POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE ISSUE OF EL SALVADOR WHEN THEY NEED TO SAVE SUCH INFLUENCE FOR THE TASK OF GAINING SUPPORT FOR NEW T N F DEPLOYMENTS VITAL TO N A T O.

4. THE WALL STREET JOURNAL DESCRIBED THE EUROPEAN REACTION TO EAGLEBURGER'S VISIT AS RANGING FROM NON-COMMITTAL TO SCEPTICAL: THE F C O IS ALLEGED TO HAVE GIVEN HIM A SYMPATHETIC HEARING BUT TO HAVE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO CONCURRING THAT EL SALVADOR'S GOVERNMENT DESERVED EUROPEAN BACKING.

5. THE NEW YORK TIMES CHARACTERIZES THE EUROPEAN RESPONSE AS ONE OF PROFOUND WARINESS.

6. U.S. OPPOSITION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE AID FOR EL SALVADOR IS REPORTED, AS IS M. THORN'S ASSERTION THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD MAINTAIN ITS HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL PROSPECTS.

7. THE GENERALLY CRITICAL EDITORIALS ABOUT U.S. POLICY IN EL SALVADOR IN THE EUROPEAN MEDIA, PARTICULARLY THE LONDON TIMES AND ECONOMIST, ARE WIDELY QUOTED.

HENDERSON

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