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10 DOWNING STREET

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El Salvador

*From the Private Secretary*

11 February 1982

EL SALVADOR

On one or two occasions recently, the most recent being today, the Prime Minister has come under some pressure at Question time about the Government's policy towards El Salvador. The subject is likely to remain a live one over the coming weeks leading up to the elections in El Salvador.

I think it would be helpful if the Prime Minister could be given a rounded assessment of the situation in El Salvador, together with a description of US policy and the attitudes of EC Member States as well as of British policy and involvement. It would also be helpful if you could suggest a rather more detailed line than has been necessary so far for handling public criticism of our policy (there seemed to me to be points in Mr. Luce's interview on the Today programme on 10 February on which the Prime Minister might usefully draw). I suppose, also, that it might to some extent be necessary to set El Salvador in the broader Central American context.

I should be grateful if a short paper covering the above points could reach me by Monday night so that it will be fresh in the Prime Minister's mind if the subject comes up again at Questions on Tuesday 16 February.

B/F ✓

AJC

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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