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DESKBY 291630Z

FM TEGUCIGALPA 291540Z MAR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 94 OF 29 MARCH

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON MEXICO CITY ROUTINE SAN JOSE BELMOPAN  
918 GUATEMALA CITY HAVANA

EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS

1. THERE WAS A LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC POLL IN YESTERDAY'S SALVADOREAN ELECTIONS. VERY EARLY RESULTS (10 PERCENT OF POLL) AT 1200Z GIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS 40 PERCENT, ARENA 30 PERCENT, PCN 15 PERCENT, ACCION DEMOCRATICA 10 PERCENT AND PPS/POP 5 PERCENT. TURNOUT ESTIMATED TO BE IN EXCESS OF 50 PERCENT EXCEEDING EVEN THE JUNTA'S EXPECTATIONS.
2. THERE WAS SOME VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT THE DAY BUT THIS DID NOT AFFECT THE MAJORITY OF VOTING CENTRES. THERE WAS SPORADIC SHOOTING IN THE CAPITAL AND ONE INCIDENT THERE IN WHICH ABOUT A DOZEN GUERRILLAS WERE KILLED. GUERRILLA VIOLENCE ISOLATED THE PROVINCIAL TOWN OF USULUTAN WHICH I WAS UNABLE TO ENTER. IN A SMALL NUMBER OF VILLAGES IN THE GUERRILLA-HELD AREAS, VOTING WAS NOT POSSIBLE. AN ESTIMATED 5 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE WAS THUS PREVENTED FROM VOTING. THERE WAS SOME EVIDENCE OF THREATS TO VOTING COMMITTEES BY THE GUERRILLAS AND BURNING OF BUSES UNDOUBTEDL REDUCED PARTICIPATION IN COUNTRY AREAS.
3. THE PATIENT AND GOOD-HUMOURED QUEUES OF THOUSANDS OF VOTERS WHO STOOD FOR HOURS IN THE HEAT (AND OFTEN WALKED MANY MILES TO GET THERE) INDICATED CLEARLY THE PEOPLE'S WISH FOR ELECTIONS. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLLING CENTRES WAS ON THE WHOLE SATISFACTORY. AT TIMES THE CUMBERSOME ELECTORAL PROCEDURE AND THE LACK OF EXPERIENCE CAUSED ERRORS. HOWEVER I RECEIVED NO SUGGESTIONS OF FRAUD OR INTERFERENCE BY ARMY.
4. I SPENT ELECTION DAY PARTLY IN CAPITAL AND PARTLY VISITING PROVINCES OF LA UNION, SAN MIGUEL, AND USULUTAN. IN THE TWO PREVIOUS DAYS, I TOURED THE NORTHERN PROVINCES OF SANTA ANA, SONSONATE, LA LIBERTAD AND MORAZAN. IN SAN FRANCISCO DE GOTERA WHICH BORDERS GUERRILLA-HELD AREA, I VISITED THE BRITISH NUNS (YOUR TELEGRAMS NUMBER 71 AND 77) AND FOUND THEM IN GOOD FORM AND NOT INTERESTED. I CHECKED AGAIN LAST NIGHT BY PHONE AS THERE HAD BEEN SHOOTING ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWN AND THEY WERE SAFE.

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5. THE BRITISH OBSERVERS HAVE VISITED A WIDE AREA OF THE COUNTRY AND HAVE BEEN PLEASED WITH WHAT THEY SAW. THEY HAVE HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM AND COOPERATION FROM THE AUTHORITIES. THEY WERE IMPRESSED AS WERE THE MANY OTHER OBSERVERS BY THE LARGE TURNOUT, THE ANXIETY OF THE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE AND THE ABSENCE SO FAR OF ANY EVIDENCE OF FRAUD.

6. IN GENERAL, THE RESULT HAS BEEN A VICTORY FOR HOLDING ELECTIONS AND A DEFEAT FOR THE GUERRILLAS' ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT THEM.  
FCO PASS ALL

SHARKEY

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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EL SALVADOR STANDARD

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