

GRS

CONFIDENTIAL ECLIPSE
 FM WASHINGTON 300042Z MAR 82
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1025 OF 29 MARCH

INFO SAN JOSE TEGUCIGALPA MEXICO CITY HAVANA UKMIS NEW YORK
 UKDEL NATO

MY TELNO 995: EL SALVADOR

1. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE AVOIDING DETAILED COMMENT UNTIL THE FULL RESULTS ARE KNOWN, THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN GREATLY RELIEVED BY THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS IN EL SAVADOR. THESE APPEAR TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUED ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT, NAMELY A HIGH TURN-OUT AND A GOVERNMENT LED BY DUARTE AND THE CENTRISTS AND COMMITTED TO THE REFORMS HE HAS BEEN SEEKING TO INITIATE. HAIG HAS WELCOMED THE HIGH TURN-OUT AS A MILITARY AS WELL AS POLITICAL DEFEAT FOR THE GUERILLAS. THE SIZE OF THE POLL HAS EXCEEDED US EXPECTATIONS. THE AMERICANS HOPE THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL BE ABLE TO FORM A COALITION WITH ONE OF THE SMALLER PARTIES, BUT WHICH MAY EXCLUDE MAJOR D'AUBUISSON AND ARENA.
2. THE US MEDIA, FROM WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SINGULARLY FAILED TO WIN SUPPORT FOR ITS POLICY, HAVE CLEARLY BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE ELECTIONS THEMSELVES. THE SIGHT OF MANY THOUSANDS OF EL SALVADORANS VOTING IN A TECHNICALLY WELL CONDUCTED ELECTION AT CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE OR DANGER TO THEMSELVES, HAS BEEN IN IMPRESSIVE CONTRAST TO THE PROTEST MEETINGS HELD IN US CITIES OVER THE WEEKEND BY OPPONENTS OF US POLICY ALTHOUGH THE ADMINISTRATION IS AWARE THAT THE ELECTION WILL NOT END THE FIGHTING, THE LARGE POLL AND THE EVIDENT DETERMINATION OF EL SALVADORANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WILL ENABLE THEM TO CONTINUE SUPPORT; AND WILL, THEY HOPE, STRENGTHEN DUARTE'S HAND VIS A VIS THE MILITARY COMMANDERS AND IN ANY ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH SOME ELEMENTS AT LEAST OF THE OPPOSITION.

HENDERSON

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EL SALVADOR STANDARD

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