

El Salvador

GRS 665

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 022300Z MAR 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 498 OF 2 MARCH

INFO IMMEDIATE HMY BRITANNIA (FOR PS/S OF S). ROUTINE MEXICO CITY, TEGUCIGALPA, SAN JOSE, BELMOPAN, PANAMA CITY, HAVANA, CARACAS, BOGOTA.

ms

U.S./EL SALVADOR

SUMMARY

1. THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE SALVADORAN REGIME'S DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION. U.S. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS HAVE EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY OF PREVENTING THE OVERTHROW OF THE REGIME AS WELL AS CONTINUED AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT GUERILLA PARTICIPATION IN THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT. A CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO AUTHORISE THE IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF AN EXTRA DOLLARS 60 MILLION IN MILITARY AID TO EL SALVADOR. THIS REQUEST IS LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER STRONG RESISTANCE ON THE HILL.

DETAIL

2. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN ALARMED BY A FLOW OF GLOOMY ASSESSMENTS FROM EL SALVADOR INDICATING THAT THE REGIME'S MILITARY SITUATION HAS BECOME MORE PRECARIOUS. FAILURE BY THE LAST CONGRESS TO PASS A FOREIGN AID BILL HAS MEANT THAT ONLY DOLLARS 26 MILLION WAS ALLOCATED FOR MILITARY AID THIS YEAR (THE ADMINISTRATION ORIGINALLY SOUGHT DOLLARS 63.3 MILLION). A STRING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SHULTZ, WEINBERGER AND ENDERS, HAVE TESTIFIED IN THE LAST WEEK THAT THE REGIME FACES A DANGER OF MILITARY DEFEAT IF A FURTHER DOLLARS 60 MILLION IS NOT IMMEDIATELY MADE AVAILABLE. THE PRESIDENT SUMMONED CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ON MONDAY TO URGE SWIFT ACTION. CONGRESS REMAINS SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE PROPOSAL. THERE MAY BE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THE AID CONTINGENT ON A SALVADORAN COMMITMENT TO ENTER INTO EARLY NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FDR.

3. THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION IS THAT THE REGIME'S MILITARY DEFEAT WOULD CONSTITUTE A SEVERE SET-BACK FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS. SHULTZ WAS VERY FIRM ABOUT THIS DURING TESTIMONY ON THE HILL EARLIER IN THE WEEK AND CAME CLOSE TO BEING TESTY IN FACE OF CRITICISM.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

4. THE ADMINISTRATION REMAINS OPPOSED TO ANY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE REGIME AND THE GUERILLAS WHICH WOULD BRING THE LATTER INTO A COALITION GOVERNMENT. SHULTZ INSISTED THAT THE REBELS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED QUOTE TO SHOOT THEIR WAY INTO POWER UNQUOTE AND THAT THEY SHOULD SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO ELECTIONS. IN THIS REGARD, FORMER SENATOR STONE HAS JUST VISITED EL SALVADOR TO DISCUSS WITH THE GOVERNMENT THE POSSIBILITY OF BRINGING FORWARD THE PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GUERILLAS TO PARTICIPATE. THE IDEA IS APPARENTLY THAT THIS SHOULD GAIN MORAL FORCE BY BEING TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE POPE2W VISIT.

5. THOUGHT IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO INCREASING THE NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY ADVISERS IN EL SALVADOR: THERE ARE CURRENTLY LESS THAN 40 IN EL SALVADOR, AND THESE ARE PREVENTED FROM PLAYING ANY PART IN COMBAT. ANY ATTEMPT TO ALTER THEIR ROLE WOULD BE VERY STRONGLY RESISTED IN CONGRESS AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE SUCCESSFUL EVEN IN ACHIEVING A SMALL INCREASE IN THEIR NUMBERS.

WRIGHT

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

LIMITED

MCAD  
DEF D  
S AM D  
NAD  
UND  
PLANNING STAFF  
LEGAL ADVISERS  
CCD  
ECD (E)  
NEWS D  
INFO D

FUSD  
PS  
PS/MR ONSLOW  
PS/PUS  
SIR J BULLARD  
MR GIFFARD  
MR WRIGHT  
MR GILLMORE  
MR URE  
CABINET OFFICE

( Repetition to SAN JOSE PANAMA CITY  
referred for departmental decision,  
repeated as requested to other posts. )

CONFIDENTIAL