

El Salvador

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FM WASHINGTON 232315Z JUN 83

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1743 OF 23 JUNE

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**CENTRAL AMERICA**

*lead in file.*

SUMMARY

1. DURING CALLS BY THE PUS YESTERDAY, SENATOR STONE (THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL ENVOY) AND MICHEL (ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS) EMPHASISED U S SUPPORT FOR THE CONTADORA INITIATIVE, AND REALISATION THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE AREA WERE SUSCEPTIBLE TO NO EARLY SOLUTION. THEY RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SALVADOREAN GUERRILLAS ABOUT POWER-SHARING, BUT INDICATED A READINESS TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS ON WAYS IN WHICH THE GERRILLAS MIGHT BE BROUGHT INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

DETAIL

**EL SALVADOR**

2. MICHEL SAID THAT IT HAD TAKEN YEARS FOR THE SITUATION TO DETERIORATE TO THIS POINT, BUT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE AN EARLY IMPROVEMENT. WHAT WAS NEEDED FOR ANY LASTING RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS WAS A BROAD AND SUSTAINED EFFORT ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FRONT, PLUS ACTION TO DEAL WITH THE INSURGENCY PROBLEM. MICHEL CLAIMED TO DERIVE SOME ENCOURAGEMENT FROM RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT FORCES HAD BEGUN TO TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE GUERRILLAS, WHOM THEY SUBSTANTIALLY OUT-NUMBERED. THEY HAD ALSO BEEN OPERATING A CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMME, PUSHING BACK THE GUERRILLAS FROM FARMING AREAS AND HELPING WITH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. HE EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE THE AMERICANS ATTACHED TO PROGRESS ON THE LAND REFORM PROGRAMME.

3. WHILE MICHEL RULED OUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GUERRILLAS AIMED AT POWER-SHARING, HE THOUGHT THERE WAS SCOPE FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE GUERRILLAS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BRINGING THEM INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS (IE PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS). THE PUS ASKED WHETHER THE SALVADOREANS WOULD WANT FOREIGN OBSERVERS FOR THEIR ELECTIONS, MAKING CLEAR THAT WE HAD TAKEN NO POSITION ON THIS. MICHEL EXPECTED THAT THEY WOULD.

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/H. STONE



4. STONE SAID THAT BEFORE HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON OF THE NEED TO LET THE LATINOS MOVE AT THEIR OWN PACE AND IN THEIR OWN TIME. THIS HAD BEEN HIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE. THE PUS NOTED THAT THIS ADVICE WAS FINE IF THERE WAS TIME. STONE AGREED, BUT SAID THAT HE WAS SURE THAT EL SALVADOR WAS NOT GOING TO FALL AND THAT NICARAGUA WOULD INVADE NEITHER HONDURAS NOR COSTA RICA. THE PUS ASKED WHETHER THE SALVADOREAN GUERRILLAS WERE STILL RECEIVING MILITARY SUPPLIES FROM NICARAGUA. STONE SAID THAT THEY WERE, BUT THAT THE SUPPLIES WERE MAINLY IN THE FORM OF MUNITIONS. THE GUERRILLA STRENGTH (5-7,000) WAS THE SAME LEVEL AS TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO, AND THEY HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH WEAPONS. UNTIL RECENTLY, THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN WEAPONS FROM CAPTURED GOVERNMENT FORCES, BUT THE KILLING OF PRISONERS WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNMENT FORCES TO FIGHT ON RATHER THAN SURRENDER. STONE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HOPED TO SEE EL SALVADOR DEVELOP IN THE SAME WAY AS HAD COLUMBIA, WHERE THE GUERRILLA GROUPS IN THE END HAD PROVEN TO HAVE LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO PROCEED DELIBERATELY IN HIS CONTACTS WITH THE SALVADOREAN LEFT, AND THAT HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY.

#### CONTADORA INITIATIVE

5. THE PUS ASKED WHETHER THE AMERICANS WOULD BE PREPARED TO ABIDE BY ANY CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES THAT MIGHT BE RECOMMENDED BY THE CONTADORA GROUP. MICHEL SAID THEY WOULD. THE AMERICANS WERE ENCOURAGED THAT THE INITIATIVE WAS FORCING THE CONTADORA FOUR TO THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT THE REGION'S PROBLEMS. THEY HOPED THE INITIATIVE WOULD HELP THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION TO EVOLVE THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES.

FCO PASS SAVING TO BIS GUATEMALA CITY.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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