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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Apex attached message
to Senor Duarte - to be delivered
when results are officially
confirmed?

London SW1A 2AH

14 May 1984

A.F.C. $\frac{14}{5}$

Dear John,

El Salvador: Presidential Elections

Although the results have yet to be officially confirmed, it is already clear that the Christian Democrat candidate, Jose Napoleon Duarte, won the elections which took place in El Salvador on 25 March and 6 May for the Presidency. Duarte, who is strongly supported by the Americans, offers the best hope for progress towards democracy and reconciliation in El Salvador. I attach a paper on the implications of his victory.

Senor Duarte paid a short call on the Prime Minister on 19 June, 1983 during a three days' sponsored visit.

We wish to support and encourage Duarte's efforts to achieve real democracy and reform. We recommend that the Prime Minister send a short congratulatory message to the new President, as soon as the results are officially confirmed, probably by the end of next week. The President takes office on 1 June. The Americans would welcome such a gesture of support for Duarte. They have expressed their gratitude for our decision to send observers to the election. A draft telegram is attached.

Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE VICTORY OF DUARTE IN THE EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS

1. José Napoleón Duarte has won the Presidential elections in El Salvador, having obtained 54.05 per cent of the votes in the run-off with his extreme right-wing opponent Roberto d'Aubuisson who gained 45.95 per cent. These results are still subject to official confirmation. Our Ambassador has reported that the election took place in an atmosphere of relative peace and with greatly improved administration. More than 80 per cent of the electorate participated. The British official observers reported that their general conclusion is that the election of 6 May did provide the people with the opportunity to decide who should be their President through a reasonably fair, secure and secret ballot. Respect of this decision by all sections of Salvadorean society, together with prosecution of terrorism, within the due process of law, is now essential if the electoral process is to be a means of their achievement of a proper democracy.

2. Duarte, a Christian Democrat, represents the moderate centrist option in El Salvador against both the extreme right-wing and the left-wing guerrillas. His victory opens up the best prospect for democracy in El Salvador. His success will depend to a large extent on strong support from the US Government which he will undoubtedly receive. President Reagan in his Address to the Nation on 9 May urged Congress to give swift approval to his requests for increased military and economic aid to El Salvador. He warned that Cuban backed left-wing guerrillas could topple the newly elected Government by the autumn if US assistance was not immediately forthcoming. Duarte's victory will probably facilitate the US Government's efforts to secure Congressional approval for the funds urgently needed to strengthen US assistance to the Salvadorean army.

3. However, Duarte faces a formidable task. The civil war is at stalemate but the strength of the guerrillas is increasing. He has promised to open a dialogue with all political currents including the extreme right-wing and the left-wing guerrillas and to set-up a special commission to track down the death squads. But at least until early 1985 when Assembly elections take place he will have to work with a National Assembly in which D'Aubuisson and his right wing allies predominate. He also faces an antagonistic private sector and an army and police whose senior command is known to dislike his policies of social reform and national reconciliation and who will oppose his efforts to put an end to the death squads.

4. Duarte was robbed of his Presidential victory in 1972 by last minute rigging the results and subsequently arrested and beaten by the Army. He participated and was later President of the civilian/military junta from 1980-82. He was almost powerless during that period to introduce social or economic changes or to control the military; and the abuse of human rights in those years was probably at the highest level ever.

5. The situation has changed considerably since then. Duarte is in a much stronger position as an elected President. The fact that he enjoys US support will give him some leverage with the military, who are dependent on US support and supplies. But he will have to move very carefully and will need international support and goodwill if he is to succeed in achieving progress towards a real democracy.

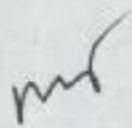
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

10 May 1984

OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats RESTRICTED	Precedence/Deskby PRIORITY
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GRS	2	GRS
CLASS	3	RESTRICTED
CAVEATS	4	
DESKBY	5	
FM FCO	6	FM FCO 141530Z MAY 84
PRE/ADD	7	TO PRIORITY TEGUCIGALPA
TEL NO	8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
	9	Please transmit the following message to Ing. Jose Napoleon
	10	Duarte from the Prime Minister, as soon as the results of
	11	the elections are officially confirmed.
	12	BEGINS
	13	Please accept my warmest congratulations on your victory
	14	in the recent presidential elections. I wish you every
	15	success during your term of office.
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NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword
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Drafted by (Block capitals)		
Telephone number		
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