

a MASTER SET



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 October, 1984

Dear Peter,

Prime Minister's Meeting with Senor Rey Prendes, Minister
of the Presidency, El Salvador, at 1700 hours
on 22 October at 10 Downing Street

The Prime Minister received Senor Rey Prendes for a brief meeting this evening. He was accompanied by the Charge d'Affaires of El Salvador.

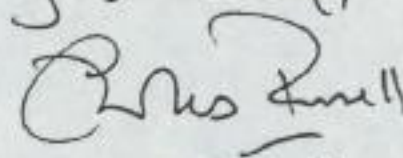
Senor Rey Prendes said that President Duarte had been horrified by the bomb attack in Brighton and wished the Prime Minister to be aware of his deep concern. He had very much enjoyed his meeting with the Prime Minister in July. He now wished her to be informed of his meeting with the FMLN/FDR leaders. Senor Rey Prendes then handed over a letter (enclosed).

The Prime Minister said that she understood that the talks with the rebels had been surprisingly successful. Could Senor Rey Prendes give her a brief account? Senor Rey Prendes said that the meeting had indeed been very positive. The guerilla leaders had been respectful, indeed almost humble, addressing President Duarte as President. They had made clear that they would accept a pluralistic society and would not seek to impose socialism or communism. They fully understood that President Duarte could not move from the constitution; they were not seeking its abrogation. These were all good signs for the future.

The Prime Minister asked why Senor Rey Prendes thought that the attitude of the guerillas had changed. Was it because the Government forces had been gaining the upper hand in the conflict? Had the meeting between the European Community, Central American Governments and the Contadora states in San Jose helped? Senor Rey Prendes said he thought both factors were important. But it was necessary to be prudent about the Contadora process. The protocol to the draft Act of Contadora needed revision. Unless there were proper controls, Nicaragua would continue to supply arms to the guerillas.

The Prime Minister asked whether President Duarte now envisaged a ceasefire. Senor Rey Prendes said that this could only come at the end of the process. If there was a ceasefire now, the guerillas would take certain towns and establish a rival Government. One had to be able to see the shape of a final agreement before moving to a ceasefire.

The Prime Minister asked when the next round of talks would take place. Senor Rey Prendes said that they would be around 21 November. The next round would not be in La Palma, but more likely at the International Airport or the Archbishop's Palace in San Salvador. Meanwhile, President Duarte would try to gather a broad front of all the internal parties to meet with the guerillas in the next round.

Yours sincerely,


C. D. POWELL

P. F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



File vs
PC
CR

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 October 1984

Dear Mr. Ricketts,

El Salvador: Visit to Britain by
Senor Rey Prendes

Thank you for your letter of 19 October about the visit to Britain of Senor Rey Prendes.

The Prime Minister is willing to see him but for 10 minutes only. I should be grateful if you could arrange for him to come to 10 Downing Street at 1715 on 22 October. It should be made clear to him in advance that the meeting will be an extremely brief one.

*Yours sincerely,
C.D. Powell*

(C.D. POWELL)

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

VSC

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister
can have agreed
to see him
for ten
minutes on
Monday.
CJP
25/10.

CALL BY SEÑOR REY PRENDES, MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY, EL SALVADOR,
ON THE PRIME MINISTER AT 17.15 hrs.
ON MONDAY 22 OCTOBER

CENTRAL AMERICA

POINTS TO MAKE

1. Please thank President Duarte for his letter. Admire his achievement in bringing the FMLN/FDR leaders to the negotiating table.
2. Welcome your assessment of meeting and prospects for national reconciliation.
3. Convinced Contadora offers best prospect of resolving the conflicts of the region. Our presence at San José meeting underlined our and EC support for efforts towards a peaceful settlement. What are prospects for agreement in accordance with Contadora principles?
4. Understand details of our aid programme to be worked out in November when Minister of Planning comes here. Wish to demonstrate our firm support for democratic rule in your country.
5. (If request is made for British training of Salvadorean military) I told President Duarte in my letter of 6 August that we can offer one or two scholarships to British staff colleges for suitably qualified Salvadorean officers. We could not offer to train the Salvadorean army in Belize; Belize is as you know an independent country.

CONFIDENTIAL

CALL BY SEÑOR REY PRENDES, MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY, EL SALVADOR
ON THE PRIME MINISTER AT 17.15 hrs ON MONDAY 22 OCTOBER

CENTRAL AMERICA

ESSENTIAL FACTS

1. Señor Rey Prendes is bringing a personal letter from President Duarte for the Prime Minister. It is likely to deal with his recent peace initiative and will reply to her letter of

A 6 August.

2. Señor Rey Prendes is effectively the most senior and influential Minister of President Duarte's Cabinet. Together with the Minister of Defence, he accompanied President Duarte to the meeting with the FMLN/FDR at La Palma on 15 October. He is therefore in a position to provide a first-hand account of the historic meeting. He attended the EDU Conference in Oslo in June, where he met the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. He is participating in the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Conference on Central America in Croydon 19-21 October.

3. On 8 October President Duarte announced in his speech to UNGA an invitation to the insurgent leaders to meet him for talks on 15 October. The latter had been pressing for some time for such talks. The meeting, which was successful beyond all expectations, opens up a real prospect of national reconciliation. But formidable difficulties remain. Both sides agreed to the creation of a joint commission under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of San Salvador "to seek ways of bringing about peace and humanizing the armed conflict."

4. Reports indicate that the last three months have been relatively quiet militarily and that the armed forces have probably now taken most of the initiative from the guerrillas. A regular stream of guerrilla deserters and captured documents have improved /the

the Salvadorean army intelligence and seem to point to slow, steady progress against the insurgents. However, there is still a long way to go, and insurgent activity since the meeting on 15 October has been undiminished.

5. The San José meeting of EC (plus Spain and Portugal), Central American (Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador) and the Contadora Group (Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Panama) Foreign Ministers at San José 28-29 September was seen by all participants as a success. The meeting coincided with important developments in the Contadora peace process: Nicaragua announced on 22 September willingness to sign the present revised draft Act of Contadora on condition it was agreed immediately, without modification and with US signature of a protocol endorsing the treaty. The other Central Americans want amendments particularly on verification and control measures for security aspects such as arms level reductions, and further negotiations are expected. Honduras has called a meeting of the five Central American states on 19 October to discuss next steps.

6. The Prime Minister wrote to the President on 6 August to inform him that we would resume a modest technical assistance programme and make available £100,000 for urgently needed civilian equipment/supplies. She also offered one or two scholarships for suitably qualified Salvadorean officers to attend staff college in the UK. We understand there are no vacancies before 1986. No applications have been received but Duarte spoke of this offer at a press conference in September. The nature of the UK technical cooperation programme for El Salvador is being worked out. It is likely to comprise a moderate number of training awards in the UK. We are also awaiting a response from the Salvadorean authorities giving their views on how best to spend the £100,000 of aid we offered for urgently needed supplies. We understand that Dr Fidel Chavez Mena, Minister of Planning (ex-Foreign Minister), who will be visiting the UK as a COI sponsored visitor at the end of November, will discuss this in detail with the ODA.

/7.

- B 7. The Economist of 6 October published an editorial advocating that Britain should train the Salvadorean army in the event that Honduras maintained its decision to refuse to allow the Americans to continue their training of the Salvadorean military in Honduras. The article suggested that training of Salvadorean troops by Britain could take place in Belize and concluded that "President Duarte knows that a request for British assistance would get a sympathetic response." The Prime Minister of Belize has expressed concern about the article and commented that the Economist seems to have forgotten that Belize is independent. It would be undesirable for Belize to be drawn into the Central American conflict in this way since it would make both Belize and the British troops there a target for left-wing subversion or terrorist activity.
-

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA DEPARTMENT

19 October 1984