

RR LUXEMBOURG

RR PARIS

RR ROME

RR THE HAGUE

RR UKREP BRUSSELS

GPS 830

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 040900Z

FM WASHINGTON 040123Z FEB 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO 350 OF 3 FEBRUARY

INFO TEGUCIGALPA, SAN JOSE, HAVANA, MEXICO CITY, MOSCOW, EEC POSTS

US POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

1. THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA IS HAVING A ROUGH PASSAGE. AT HOME A GROWING CHORUS HAS TAKEN UP THE THEMES OF THE VIETNAM WAR PROTEST MOVEMENT. ABROAD, PARTICULARLY IN WESTERN EUROPE, PUBLIC OPINION APPEARS EAGER TO SEE AMERICAN ACTION IN EL SALVADOR AS A COUNTERPOINT TO RUSSIAN ACTION IN POLAND AND AFGHANISTAN. WORST OF ALL, THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA SHOWS NO SIGN OF IMPROVEMENT: IN EL SALVADOR, THE US IS BEING DRAWN MORE CLOSELY INTO THE CONTINUING CIVIL WAR WITH LITTLE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME. NICARAGUA DRIFTS STEADILY INTO THE CUBAN/SOVIET EMBRACE. THE GUATEMALAN REGIME BECOMES MORE DEEPLY REPRESSIVE THAN EVER, WHILE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THREATEN THE STABILITY OF VIRTUALLY EVERY COUNTRY ON THE ISTHMUS.

2. I DISCUSSED THIS WITH ENDERS (ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LATIN AMERICA) TODAY, 3 FEBRUARY, NOTING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS INCREASINGLY BEING OBLIGED BY THESE DIFFICULTIES TO EMPHASIZE CUBAN/RUSSIAN MEDDLING IN CENTRAL AMERICAN AFFAIRS. ENDERS REPLIED THAT THE US HAD SO FAR FAILED TO REACH DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENTS OVER THE QUESTION OF SUBVERSION. OVERTURES TO NICARAGUA HAD FAILED: WITH REGARD TO CUBA, THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION COULD NOT CONTINUE THE POLICIES OF ITS PREDECESSOR, WHICH HAD SOUGHT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS ONLY TO FIND THAT CUBAN AGGRESSIVENESS IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE HAD INCREASED. HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE PROSPECT OF

ADVANCE COPY

P
 AS LIS
 AS make
 AS telus
 Mr Day
 Mr Vite
 Mr Burkard
 Mr Goodwin
 Mr Mess
 Mr NAG
 Mr to DIS
 RC
 TYPES

Dis
 040900Z

Served Under

ELSEWHERE HAD INCREASED. HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE CUBANS, BUT HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THEY WOULD PRODUCE RESULTS. HAIG'S TALKS WITH GROMYKO HAD ALSO PRODUCED NOTHING.

3. ENDERS SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE GENERAL DIRECTION TO US POLICY GIVEN BY HAIG'S EARLIER REMARK THAT THE PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL AMERICA SHOULD BE QUOTE TACKLED AT SOURCE UNQUOTE, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS LAYING INCREASING EMPHASIS ON THE CUBAN CONNECTION. HE HOPED THAT THIS WOULD HELP WITH US PUBLIC OPINION (HE CLAIMED THAT THAT THERE WAS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT THE US SHOULD GO TO WAR (SIC) IF THE 1962 AGREEMENT WHICH BROUGHT THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS TO AN END WAS BREACHED). BUT HE WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED TO INFLUENCE OVERSEAS OPINION (PARTICULARLY IN WESTERN EUROPE), WHERE HE CONCEDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN OVER-EMPHASIS ON EL SALVADOR. THE US WAS FAILING IN ITS PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK AND WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER THE PRESENTATION (NOT THE SUBSTANCE) OF ITS POLICIES. ONE THING WHICH MIGHT HELP WOULD BE THE ANNOUNCEMENT SHORTLY OF THE LONG-AWAITED CARIBBEAN BASIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHICH WOULD ESSENTIALLY OPEN US MARKETS TO THE REGION FOR 12 YEARS AND PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR US INVESTMENT THERE. HOPEFULLY THIS WOULD MEET IN SOME RESPECTS THE COMPLAINTS OF THOSE WHO SAW US POLICY AS OVER-CONCENTRATED ON SECURITY THEMES.

4. ENDERS ADDED THAT THE AMERICANS' MAIN OBJECTIVE AT THE MOMENT WAS TO MOBILISE REGIONAL POWERS TO BRING INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR.

A GROUP OF REGIONAL DEMOCRACIES WAS ALSO LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING DEMARCHES IN EUROPE TO EXPLAIN THE THREAT POSED TO THE REGION BY CUBAN/RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES. HE HOPED THESE MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN LONDON AND ELSEWHERE IN PERSUADING GOVERNMENTS TO SEND OBSERVERS TO THE EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS. SEE MIPT (FCO ONLY) ON THIS QUESTION.

5. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS MORE FIRMLY COMMITTED THAN EVER TO THE EL SALVADOR GOVERNMENT, INSPITE OF THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DIFFICULTIES THAT THIS CAUSES IT. AS YOU KNOW THEY ARE STEPPING UP THEIR AID PROGRAMME AND MAY WELL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN QUOTE ADVISERS UNQUOTE. ENDERS HIMSELF NOTED THAT ANY OTHER POLICY WOULD HAVE CAUSED EL SALVADOR TO GO THE WAY OF NICARAGUA. THE ADMINISTRATION IS RESOLUTELY DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN; IT WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE, AS ENDERS INDICATED, TO

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT.

TEMPORARILY
RETAINED

THIS TO HAPPEN: IT WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE, AS ENDERS INDICATED, TO
BACK THE REGIME'S LAND REFORM PROGRAMME, TO HELP IT BUILD A
COHERENT POLITICAL PLATFORM AND TO RESIST BY ALL NECESSARY MEANS
ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT THE GOVERNMENT.

6. I AM SORRY TO BE IMPLYING THAT NO SOONER HAVE YOU HELPED TO
DEFUSE ONE SERIOUS PROBLEM BETWEEN THE ALLIES (POLAND) THAN ANOTHER
SOARS UP. CERTAINLY EL SALVADOR SHOULD NOT BE AN ALLIANCE ISSUE,
BUT THE WAY THE PRESENT U.S. ADMINISTRATION TENDS TO VIEW
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, EVERYTHING THAT VITALLY AFFECTS THEM SHOULD
BE REGARDED BY THEIR ALLIES AS AFFECTING THEM. SO THEY DO NOT LIKE
PRESENT ATTITUDES OF SOME EUROPEANS WHO PARADE THEIR MORAL SCRUPLES
BUT WHOSE INTERESTS DO NOT RISK BEING DIRECTLY TOUCHED, WHEN WHAT
IS AT ISSUE IS THE QUESTION WHETHER ANOTHER COUNTRY IN THE
WESTERN HEMISPHERE IS GOING TO BECOME A CUBAN/SOVIET SATRAP. I
KNOW THIS LOOKS TOO BLACK AND WHITE IN LONDON: AND I DO NOT SUGGEST
WE GO OVER BOARD FOR DUARTE BUT THERE DOES SEEM TO ME TO BE A CASE
FOR SHOWING A READINESS TO JUDGE THE EVIDENCE WHICH IS WHAT WOULD
BE INVOLVED BY SENDING OBSERVERS.

HENDERSON

NNNN