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NOTE FOR: Messrs. Enders, Bushnell, Palmer,
Ledeen, Dachi

SUBJECT : The Urgent Need for a Systematic
International Communications Effort
About the March 28th, 1982 Election in
El Salvador

Based upon the interagency meeting today,
we do not seem to have enough to assure an effective
post-election communication process internationally.
The attached unsigned memo offers some specific
suggestions.



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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Telling the Truth About the Coming Elections in El Salvador -- the Urgent Need to Prepare Our International Communications Effort

There are nine days left before the scheduled elections in El Salvador. We can be certain that the extreme left and its international supporters in Europe and Latin America are prepared to launch an orchestrated campaign which will continue their efforts to discredit the elections--whatever the outcome.

A large number of observers from democratic governments and groups such as political parties, free trade unions, and civic associations will be in El Salvador to observe the election (estimates place the number of people at more than 100 from about 20 democratic countries). The US must and should make a special effort to assure that the truth about the El Salvador election reaches key international opinion leaders in Europe and Latin America:

- Government leaders
- Christian Democrats with a focus on Bonn, Brussels, Rome, Caracas
- Moderate Social Democrats - London Social International headquarters, Bonn, Portugal, Lisbon, and the PLN in San Jose, Costa Rica
- Trade union leaders - ICFTU in Brussels or ORIT in Mexico City and Caracas
- Etc.

Right now we know that many European heads of government will be meeting in Brussels on about March 29-30 and that the SI International Executive Committee will be meeting in Bonn on April 1 and 2, 1982. A timely and well-managed communications effort could well make a large difference in how these important international leaders perceive and comment on the Salvadoran elections (although it is virtually certain that the majority of the SI will condemn them, which makes a countervailing voice from the Christian Democrats all the more important).

A first suggestion for specific actions which might be taken by State and ICA would include the following:

1. Translate the El Salvadoran GIST and other relevant background material into French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese and immediately provide it to our main embassies in Latin America and Europe with a focus on the capitals mentioned above plus Mexico City.

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2. Instruct the embassies to have several briefing personnel available on Sunday and Monday, March 28 and 29, who will provide comment material from Christian Democrats, trade union leaders, etc., to their counterparts in the various capitals (e.g. a US or German labor union leader's positive comment from El Salvador would be provided to a Venezuelan or British labor leader in his home country). This will require embassy officers to think about the appropriate contacts and be prepared to meet them.
3. Obtain a list of all international democratic observers in El Salvador and conduct a preliminary analysis to identify those most likely to be objective and constructive.
4. Assign extra communications personnel on TDY to El Salvador with tape recorders and perhaps even portable videotape equipment so that there can be immediate simultaneous interviews at the close of the polls Sunday, March 28th, of a number of international observers for commentary on the fairness of the process.
5. US Embassy El Salvador should be given the extra help on TDY (if necessary) so that it can immediately transcribe and transmit the print and videotape copy to Washington for appropriate transmittal to the embassies in Europe and Latin America. (Comments of labor leaders, party leaders, etc., should, of course, be translated into the language of the country where they can be communicated--best would be to have his text copy and/or videotape with voice-over.)
6. The same process should be repeated on the following day, Monday, March 29th in order to transmit:
 - a. comments from democratic leaders refuting the lies that will have been told by the extreme left in its propaganda circuit, and
 - b. discussion of the election outcome and prospects for the future.
7. An added constructive opportunity while all these democratic international visitors are in El Salvador would be to have some of them visit land reform locations and obtain their positive comments about the government's efforts to undertake social and economic reforms in the midst of a very difficult guerrilla war.

I repeat that these are intended as illustrative suggestions and represent my first thoughts in the full understanding that State and ICA have the institutional responsibility and resources to carry out this communications task. I will repeat the point I made at the interagency meeting today -- the US Government must do much more than has been done to date if the communications benefit of a positive election and the presence of democratic international observers in El Salvador are to be realized. Following up on Mr. Palmer's suggestion, I will, of course, be happy to meet with the appropriate individuals at State in order to discuss this further next week.

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