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ACTION ARA-16

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 16080

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: XK, PREL, SCOM, UK, US
SUBJECT: THATCHER DEFENDS U.S. POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL
- AMERICA

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IN WINDING UP THE CURRENT COMMONS SESSION, THATCHER
DEFENDED THE U.S. AGAINST LABOR LEADER MICHAEL FOOT'S
CRITICISM AND OPPOSITION TAUNTS ABOUT SLAVISH SUPPORT.
SHE DREW EFFECTIVELY ON PRESIDENT
REAGAN'S RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE, AND REPEATED MANY
OF THE SAME POINTS ON TV JUNE 28.
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3. STRESSING THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF BRITAIN AND
THE FREE WORLD THAT COMMUNISM NOT MAKE GREAT STRIDES
IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THATCHER NOTED THAT ONCE COMMUNISTS
WIN POWER THEY CAN NEVER BE VOTED OUT. PRESIDENT REAGAN
IS SEEKING TO HELP THE PEOPLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA CHOOSE
THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS, AS THE EL SALVADORANS DID IN A

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COURAGEOUS ELECTION IN 1982. SHE EXPRESSED PRIDE THAT BRITAIN HAD SENT OBSERVERS. WHEN PRESSED ON THE RISKS OF MILITARY CONFLICT FLOWING FROM RECENT U.S. ACTIONS, SHE EMPHASIZED THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN IS NOT PLANNING FOR MILITARY CONFLICT AND SHE REMINDED THE BRITISH PUBLIC THAT THREE QUARTERS OF AMERICAN AID IS NOT MILITARY AND THAT 75 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR GOES FOR AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING, AND CIVIL AID. SHE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT "WE SHOULD GIVE AMERICA MORE PRAISE".

4. WE CHECKED WITH THE FCO TO SEE HOW MUCH CRITICISM HMG IS GETTING FOR ITS SUPPORTIVE STAND ON CENTRAL AMERICA. AFTER A JULY 4-5 WAVE OF PROTESTS WHICH WE ALSO RECEIVED, THE FCO HAS NOTED A DOWNTURN IN CORRESPONDENCE FROM MPS AND THE PUBLIC. THIS RESPITE IS PRIMARILY DUE TO VACATIONS, AND THE FCO EXPECTS RENEWED INTEREST BY EARLY SEPTEMBER. THE FCO ASKED THAT WE CONTINUE TO KEEP THEM WELL INFORMED SO THAT THEY CAN RESPOND PROPERLY AND NOT BE HIT BY SURPRISE.

5. THE THATCHER GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE SMALL GROUP OF EUROPEANS SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. AS CENTRAL AMERICA HAS MUSHROOMED IN MEDIA ATTENTION IN BRITAIN, WE HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO SEE MONTHS OF WORK BY WASHINGTON EMISSARIES AND POLICY GUIDANCE, WHICH WE RELAY TO THE FCO AND OTHERS, PAY OFF

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WITH REPEATED PUBLIC DEFENSES OF AMERICAN POLICY GOALS. WE HAVE THANKED HMG FOR THEIR SUPPORT. WE SECOND THE FCO'S REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONTINUE SUPPLYING US WITH AS MUCH TIMELY, CRISP, FACTUAL MATERIAL AS POSSIBLE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. LOUIS

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