

Talking Points for Moakley Press Conference

1) **Military as an Institution:** There is an attitude of suspicion and anger towards the Jesuits and other activist elements of the church. During our visit to El Salvador we were repeatedly told by military officers about how "dumb" the murders were and what "a stupid mistake." No one ever said they were sorry -- you never got the sense that there was any real remorse. Despite the fact that the military has pledged full cooperation in the investigation, to my knowledge not a single member of the armed forces has voluntarily come forward with any information of any value in this case.

2) **Good Police Work Early in the Investigation:** The Special Investigative Unit (SIU) did a good job in gathering the technical evidence in this case -- ballistics tests, fingerprints, handwriting analysis, etc..... I commend President Cristiani and Lt. Col. Rivas, the head of the SIU for this. The ballistics match-ups helped narrow the suspects in the case.

3) **The US Major May Have Been Key to Arrests:** On January 2, an American military officer assigned to the US Embassy came forward with information indicating that Col. Benavides had told the head of the SIU not long after the murders occurred that he was responsible for the crimes. Embassy officials immediately confronted the Salvadoran High Command with the information, and five days later the Salvadoran Government announced for the first time that the military had murdered the priests. So, while good police work was essentially, it may have been the American officers decision to come forward that actually precipitated the arrests. (It's all in the report in detail)...

4) **The SIU and Judge are Not Doing Anything:** Under the Salvadoran system the judge has an investigative role to play. He can order the SIU to look into certain matters. It's April 30th and the judge and the head of the SIU have met once -- and that was at the urging of the Embassy. The head of the SIU can also investigate things on his own --- but has used the excuse that he is waiting on the judge as a reason not to act. The head of the SIU claims that judge hasn't contacted him again since that first meeting in March.

5) **Key Issues that Have Not Been Investigated:** a) no questions have been asked of any members of the military who were at a meeting with Col. Benavides a few hours before the murders; b) no questions have been asked of any of Col. Benavides' colleagues or friends about knowledge of the crime; c) 3 days before the murder the same unit that killed the priests did a search of the priests' residence -- with them was a member of the Salvadoran National Intelligence. To date no one has questioned the Intelligence officer; d) Our report details a number of other such instances....

6) **What About the Role of the US Embassy?** I like Ambassador Walker - he has a tough job, one that I certainly wouldn't want. Do I think some mistakes were made? The answer is yes. But, overall I think the Embassy has from the beginning pushed hard to get to the bottom of this. I read the classified cable traffic from Nov. 16 to present, and I must tell you that from day one Bill Walker has been insisting to Salvadoran authorities that justice must be done. The problem here is not the US Embassy -- it's the Salvadoran system.

7) **What about U.S. Aid to El Salvador?** The mandate of this Task Force was not to make recommendations with regard to future US aid to El Salvador -- and, therefore, I think it would be best for us not to comment on that at this point. I will say, however, that I would expect this report to be part of a number of sources that Members will use in deciding that question.

8) **What about US Training of the murderers?** At least eight of the nine soldiers involved in the murders received some sort of US training -- four of them actually received training in the United States. In the back of the report is a detailed description of the type of training they received. It is especially disturbing that some of the soldiers involved in the crime were being trained by US forces just 2 or three days before the murders took place.

9) **What about 60 Minutes?** I have a video tape of it which I haven't seen...so I can't really comment on it.