

Notes for Joe Moakley for NBC Nightly News Interview on Jesuits Case

This segment will be aired on November 16th -- the anniversary of the murders. You need a couple of strong quotes...The following are some suggestions:

* The Salvadoran military is the problem. As I said in August, and I'll say it again today, the High Command of the Salvadoran armed forces is engaged in a conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Jesuits' case. Salvadoran military officers have repeatedly lied about the facts in the case, destroyed evidence and perjured themselves before the presiding judge.

* I believe this case could be solved overnight if there existed the political will within the Salvadoran military to bring the murderers to justice.

* The U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Government, I believe, are committed to solving this case. But there have been some shocking examples of incompetence and major screw-ups.

* The murders of the Jesuits prompted the cuts in military aid. Congress is finally saying enough is enough.

* I like President Cristiani and wish I could support him. But there is a fine line between being a good guy and a God damned fool. To not recognize that Cristiani's power is severely curtailed by the military is just plain foolish. We need to send a message to the military.

* I am hopeful that this case will eventually be solved. I think there are a lot of soldiers who are shaken by the aid cut -- and I hope those officers will come forward to expose the truth.

*I believe that more than the nine currently charged are involved in the murders. And, at the very least, we can be sure that the High Command is engaged in a cover-up.

*I don't like the FMLN -- and they have been guilty of many atrocities. But we don't fund them. We do fund the Salvadoran military and we must bare some responsibility for their actions.

Background on Moakley-DeConcini bill

* Moakley became interested in this issue after visiting with some constituents and Salvadoran refugees, during a visit to the Jamaica Plain Post Office in 1983.

* Moakley, and 88 others, wrote the Secretary of State and Attorney General in 1983, urging that they grant extended voluntary departure status to Salvadorans. They wrote back saying no.

* Moakley and DeConcini introduced legislation to suspend deportations for Salvadorans in Nov. 1983.

* Moakley first passed the bill as an amendment to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. It was dropped in conference. That amendment contained Nicaraguans as well -- as suggested by Claude Pepper, Larry Smith and Barney Frank.

*The Moakley bill passed the House a total of 4 times.

*The DeConcini version was reported favorably out of the Senate Judiciary Committee twice (You might want to check with Ceil in Sen. DeConcini's office).

* When the Moakley bill (HR 45) passed the House in 1988 -- it included Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and Chinese. When it passed as an amendment to HR 4300, Nicaraguans and Chinese were dropped --because the war in Nicaragua had ended and there was no longer a need for this type of protection and because the President granted a more generous protection, by way of executive order, to the Chinese.

* The most recent amendment did include the additions of Kuwait, Lebanon and Liberia. We thought that conditions in those countries warranted special protections. We are hoping that these groups will be protected under the general temporary protected status statutes that are in the bill -- despite the fact that these nationalities were not singled out in the final version accepted by the conferees.

*The effort to protect Salvadorans has been supported by groups like: the ACLU, the AFL-CIO, The National Council of La Raza, Church World Service, The US Catholic Conference, the American Jewish Committee and a wide range of Salvadoran refugee groups. It also has the support of President Cristiani.