

For Immediate Release  
June 27, 1990  
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Statement by Congressman Joe Moakley  
on El Salvador Language in Appropriations Bill

Since December 5, 1989, I have served as chair of Speaker Foley's Special Task Force on El Salvador -- monitoring the investigation of the November 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests and their two women co-workers, and examining other issues concerning El Salvador. **We continue to actively monitor the Jesuit case -- particularly given its implications with regard to the role of the military in civilian society.**

On May 22, along with my colleague Representative John Murtha (D-PA), I offered an amendment to the Supplemental Foreign Aid Authorization Bill designed to encourage both the FMLN and the Salvadoran government to negotiate an end to the decade-long civil war. The "Moakley-Murtha" provision was approved by the House by a vote of 250-163. Some suggested that the vote was "only symbolic" because the larger authorization bill, to which the amendment was attached, was defeated on final passage. However, with the cooperation of Representative David Obey (D-WI), the "Moakley-Murtha" provision was written into the FY1991 Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill (H.R. 5114), approved by the House today.

Today the House has spoken clearly, and without equivocation. United States policy towards El Salvador must be changed. The El Salvador provision adopted today includes a withholding of 50 percent of U.S. military aid to El Salvador, and incentives for both the Salvadoran government and the FMLN to negotiate an end to the war. **This is a decisive and constructive step toward achieving a policy that defends human rights and supports a negotiated political solution to the conflict.** Our action today means that the United States will work actively to promote a settlement of the war and broad political participation -- rather than continue a policy that only sustains the military conflict. We must be steadfast and clear in this commitment.

As Salvadorans seek to overcome historic divisions in the interest of bringing peace to their country, we must bring unified support for their efforts. We anticipate continued, good-faith discussions with the Administration about how the approach to supporting a negotiated settlement, approved by the House again today, can be the basis of a bipartisan policy toward El Salvador.

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June 28, 1990

Statement by Congressman Joe Moakley (D-Mass.)  
In Response to Rappaport Ad

Guillermo Ungo is an internationally respected opposition leader in El Salvador. He has been a frequent visitor to the United States and has routinely had visits with Bush Administration officials and Members of Congress -- from both sides of the aisle. Within the last week he has met with Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson, Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) and me. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss prospects for a negotiated settlement to the decade long civil war in El Salvador.

Dr. Ungo has long been an important figure on the Salvadoran political scene. In 1972, he ran for Vice-President on a ticket with Presidential candidate Jose Napoleon Duarte. Last year, Ungo was a candidate for President for the civilian opposition party called the Democratic Convergence.

Regardless of what thinks of Dr. Ungo's political views, it is important to recognize that opposition political parties and leaders will play an important role in bringing an end to the Salvadoran war. To suggest, as does James Rappaport, that those who meet with men like Dr. Ungo are "consorting with terrorists" shows a basic and shocking ignorance of the political realities in El Salvador.

70,000 civilians have been killed during the last 10 years. On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests and two women were savagely murdered by members of the Salvadoran armed forces -- who were trained by U.S. military personnel. The U.S. currently sends 1.5 million dollars a day of taxpayers' money to fund the government of El Salvador. Members of Congress have an obligation to search openly and mindfully for an end to this tragedy.

I commend John Kerry for his willingness to talk with all sides and to take the lead in trying to forge a constructive U.S. policy towards that war-torn country. He is Senator who has earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues for both his vision and skill.

And as for James Rappaport, I would suggest that he ask the Bush Administration or one of the senior Republican Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a clarification as to why they sensibly see value in talking to men like Dr. Ungo.

Statement by Congressman Joe Moakley on Guillermo Ungo

Peace has lost a good friend and El Salvador has lost a courageous, creative and respected leader. Dr. Ungo was dedicated to bringing peace to his war torn country. I am only sorry he could not see the day of a negotiated end to El Salvador's bloody civil war. Those of us who knew him--and want to pay our respects should now redouble our efforts to achieve peace and justice in El Salvador.

Dear ----:

*For*  
*Fred Clark*  
*W.D.M.*  
*W.D.M.*

I am writing you to express my grave concern over the cynical distortions and untruths being circulated by James Rappaport and his handlers in the race for the U.S. Senate.

As chairman of the Special Task Force investigating the murders of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador last winter, I am appalled by Mr. Rappaport's continuing attempts to exploit that nation's suffering for his own political advantage.

Mr. Rappaport has spent vast sums of money in a recent effort to portray Senator John Kerry as a senator who "consorts with terrorists." In a full-page newspaper advertisement, the Rappaport campaign implied sinister motives to a reception--co-hosted by John Kerry and myself--for Dr. Guillermo Ungo, a legitimate and respected political leader from El Salvador. Mr. Rappaport clearly wants the public to believe that Dr. Ungo is in some fashion a terrorist himself.

That assertion is arrant nonsense. It has been completely and repeatedly disproven, even by members of Mr. Rappaport's own party.

And yet the Rappaport campaign is continuing to peddle this distortion to the public. The advertisements keep running and the candidate keeps asserting that Dr. Ungo is linked to terrorists. The lie just keeps building.

As several news organizations have already reported, Dr. Ungo is in fact an important figure on the Salvadoran political scene. In 1972, he ran for vice-president of El Salvador on a ticket with Jose Napoleon Duarte; last year, he was the presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence, a civilian opposition party. He has met frequently with high-ranking officials of the Reagan and Bush administrations, including Vice President Dan Quayle and Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson. He has also met with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle--Democrats like myself and John Kerry, and Republicans like Indiana senator Richard Lugar.

To imply that this man is a terrorist is to display a profound and disturbing ignorance of a most important area of U.S. foreign policy. The fact that spokesmen for Vice President Quayle and Senator Lugar--members of Mr. Rappaport's own party--have confirmed that Dr. Ungo is not a terrorist, ought to demonstrate how far Mr. Rappaport has strayed from the political mainstream in his attack on Senator Kerry.

But even after being debunked by so many news organizations, Mr. Rappaport has refused to back away from his past distortions. In a June 14 fundraising letter, he explicitly accused Senator Kerry of hosting a reception for "terrorists." Just last weekend, the now-discredited "terrorist" ad ran, unchanged, in the Cape Cod Times. Mr. Rappaport also continued to disparage Dr. Ungo in a recent interview on radio station WEEI.

Mr. Rappaport has also attempted to draw a specious distinction between the "meetings" that Dr. Ungo has had with Republicans like Quayle and Lugar, and the "reception" for Dr. Ungo that Senator Kerry and I co-hosted. That distinction is as phony as the rest of Mr. Rappaport's accusations.

The reception to which Mr. Rappaport refers was a meeting between Dr. Ungo and a number of members of Congress and their staff aides. I can say definitively that this reception was not a social occasion. It was in fact a briefing in which Dr. Ungo presented his views and fielded questions from a group that included both Democrats and Republicans.

Because of my longstanding concern for the tragic situation in El Salvador, I am acutely aware of the need for dialogue, discussion, and conciliation among that nation's warring factions. The cause of peace demands that we in the Congress be willing to meet with, and listen to, all responsible parties involved in the Salvadoran conflict.

That is precisely what John Kerry was doing when he met with Dr. Ungo. Only the most ignorant--or the most cynical--political opportunist would attempt to argue differently.

I'm not sure whether Mr. Rappaport is maliciously misstating the facts about Dr. Ungo, or if he is just grossly misinformed. I do know that--either way--he has crossed the line of what can be considered acceptable behavior in a political campaign.

It's not just that Mr. Rappaport doesn't always speak the truth: it's that he persists in peddling his lies, even after the truth has been discovered. His systematic distortions are precisely the sort of campaign tactic that threatens to turn modern politics into a cynical and valueless game of deceiving the voters. He has gone way past the line that defines the exaggerations and rhetoric of a heated campaign. He has begun to traffic in brazen lies--and then to boast about the success of such a "strategy."

That's not the way politics are supposed to work. I hope you agree with me that the voters of Massachusetts deserve far better than they have been getting from James Rappaport. I hope you agree, with me, that they deserve the truth.