

**REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN JOE MOAKLEY  
TUFTS UNIVERSITY  
OCTOBER 14, 1990**

**I'M A NUTS AND BOLTS, BREAD AND BUTTER  
POLITICIAN FROM SOUTH BOSTON.**

**I AM NOT A FOREIGN POLICY EXPERT.**

**I HAVE ALWAYS FELT MORE COMFORTABLE TALKING  
ABOUT JOBS, VETERANS ISSUES, HEALTH CARE, HOUSING  
MATTERS, EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT --- REALLY  
ANYTHING BUT FOREIGN POLICY.**

**BUT SHORTLY AFTER THE NOVEMBER 16TH MURDERS OF  
THE SIX JESUITS, THEIR HOUSEKEEPER AND HER DAUGHTER  
IN EL SALVADOR, SPEAKER TOM FOLEY APPOINTED ME TO  
HEAD A 19 MEMBER DEMOCRATIC TASK FORCE TO MONITOR  
THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATION INTO THIS  
HORRIBLE CRIME. AND FOR THE PAST 11 MONTHS, I HAVE  
FOLLOWED THIS ISSUE CLOSELY -- TALKING WITH  
SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, QUESTIONING U.S.  
OFFICIALS, TRAVELING TO EL SALVADOR, READING  
THROUGH BOXES OF CABLE TRAFFIC, AND EVEN SECRETLY  
MEETING WITH SALVADORANS WHO HAVE RELEVANT  
INFORMATION ON THIS CASE IN FAR-OUT PLACES UNDER**

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY CONDITIONS. I'VE SOMETIMES FELT LIKE HUMPHREY BOGART IN ONE OF THOSE OLD DETECTIVE MOVIES.

BUT I HAVE BEEN DETERMINED TO TALK TO EVERYONE. I'VE BEEN DETERMINED TO BE FAIR. AND I'VE BEEN DETERMINED TO GET TO THE TRUTH.

ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE TRUTH IS NOT YET KNOWN, I AM CONFIDENT THAT IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE IT WILL BE KNOWN. AND I SEE PART OF MY ROLE IN THE COMING MONTHS, AS BEING A REMINDER TO THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT -- AND THE SALVADORAN MILITARY -- THAT CONGRESS WILL NOT LET UP UNTIL THIS CASE IS RESOLVED. BY BEING RESOLVED, I MEAN BRINGING TO JUSTICE NOT ONLY THOSE WHO PULLED THE TRIGGERS -- BUT ALSO THE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS OF THIS CRIME.

THE JESUITS' CASE IS COMPLICATED -- AS IS THE OVERALL SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR. WITH EACH NEW PIECE OF INFORMATION, COMES MORE AND MORE QUESTIONS. WITH EACH NEW LEAD, COMES MORE POSSIBILITIES OF WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE CRIME.

AFTER 11 MONTHS, HOWEVER, I DO BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO COME TO SOME SOLID CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CASE -- AND ABOUT SOME OF THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS THAT FACE EL SALVADOR.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THE MURDERS OF THE JESUITS REFLECT PROBLEMS WITHIN THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES THAT GO FAR BEYOND THE ACTIONS OF A PARTICULAR UNIT ON A PARTICULAR NIGHT. WHAT HAPPENED ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 16TH, WAS NOT THE ACTION OF A RENEGADE GROUP OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS WHO SUDDENLY LOST THEIR COOL. IT WAS PREMEDITATED MURDER. AND WAS EXECUTED BY ACTUAL MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES -- NOT SOME VIGILANTE GROUP.

IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE MURDERS OF THE JESUITS GREW OUT OF AN ATTITUDE OF SUSPICION AND ANGER TOWARDS ACTIVIST SEGMENTS OF THE CHURCH THAT REMAINS ALL TOO WIDESPREAD WITHIN THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES AND CERTAIN OTHER SECTORS OF SALVADORAN SOCIETY. BECAUSE OF THIS ATTITUDE, TOO LITTLE EFFORT IS MADE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THOSE WHO USE NON-VIOLENT METHODS TO ADVOCATE OR ACHIEVE CHANGE, AND GUERRILLAS WHO TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

AS YOU KNOW, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT ON NOVEMBER 16TH, SIX OF THE MOST RESPECTED JESUIT PRIESTS IN EL SALVADOR, ALONG WITH THEIR HOUSEKEEPER AND DAUGHTER, WERE BRUTALLY MURDERED BY MEMBERS OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY. THOSE WHO PULLED THE TRIGGER AND COMMITTED THIS HEINOUS CRIME, INCLUDED MEN TRAINED WITH AMERICAN MONEY, BY AMERICAN SERVICEMEN, ON AMERICAN SOIL. WE ALL MUST BARE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS CRIME -- IN MUCH THE SAME WAY WE MUST BARE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR, WHICH HAS CLAIMED OVER 70,000 LIVES.

LAST JANUARY, SALVADORAN PRESIDENT ALFREDO CRISTIANI CAME TO WASHINGTON AND PAID ME A VISIT. I GENUINELY LIKE PRESIDENT CRISTIANI -- AND THINK HE IS A GOOD FELLOW. HE HAS TAKEN SOME RISKS IN PURSUING THE JESUITS' CASE AND I BELIEVE HE IS COMMITTED TO A JUST RESOLUTION OF THE CASE.

WHEN HE VISITED ME LAST JANUARY, HE REITERATED HIS COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND ASSURED ME THAT HE HAD THE TOTAL COOPERATION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, IT IS MY JUDGEMENT THAT THE SALVADORAN MILITARY HAS NOT COOPERATED -- IN FACT THEY HAVE OBSTRUCTED JUSTICE IN THIS CASE.

AND JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, WHEN PRESIDENT CRISTIANI CAME BACK TO WASHINGTON, I TOLD HIM -- FACE TO FACE -- THAT IT WAS MY VIEW THAT THE MILITARY WAS COVERING-UP.

THE SPECIAL TASK FORCE, WHICH I CHAIR, STRESSED THE FAILURE OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY TO COOPERATE WITH THE INVESTIGATION IN OUR APRIL 30TH INTERIM REPORT. WE HAD HOPED THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PRESSURE THE MILITARY INTO BEING MORE REASONABLE.

IN AUGUST, I SENT A STAFF DELEGATION TO EL SALVADOR TO DO SOME FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONING. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THEIR FINDINGS THAT NO PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE -- DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDING JUDGE IN THE CASE WAS TAKING THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF CALLING MILITARY OFFICERS INTO COURT TO TESTIFY.

IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF, BASED ON THE INFORMATION WE HAVE GATHERED, THAT THE HIGH COMMAND OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES IS ENGAGED IN A CONSPIRACY TO OBSTRUCT JUSTICE IN THE JESUITS' CASE. SALVADORAN MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE WITHHELD EVIDENCE, FALSIFIED EVIDENCE AND REPEATEDLY PERJURED THEMSELVES BEFORE THE JUDGE.

GIVEN THE LOYALTIES WHICH EXIST IN THE SALVADORAN MILITARY, I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS LACK OF COOPERATION COULD OCCUR WITHOUT THE AT LEAST THE TACIT CONSENT OF THE HIGH COMMAND.

THE HIGH COMMAND'S GOAL FROM THE BEGINNING HAS BEEN TO CONTROL THE INVESTIGATION AND TO LIMIT THE RANK OF THE OFFICERS WHO WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIMES. AS A RESULT, SOME INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE MURDERS HAVE BEEN SHEILDDED FROM SERIOUS INVESTIGATION.

LET ME BE SPECIFIC:

\* NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES HAS COME FORWARD OPENLY AND VOLUNTARILY WITH INFORMATION IN THE CASE. THIS IS TRUE DESPITE THE FACT THAT LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WERE DEPLOYED IN THE AREA AROUND THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA ON THE NIGHT OF THE MURDERS.

\* KEY LOGBOOKS SHOWING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF VEHICLES FROM THE MILITARY SCHOOL -- THE PLACE WHERE THE OPERATION TO KILL THE JESUITS BEGAN -- WERE BURNED, APPARANTLY ON THE ORDERS OF A SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER.

\* WHEN THE JUDGE REQUESTED THE PRESENCE OF FOUR CADETS ON DUTY AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL ON THE NIGHT OF THE CRIMES, THE WRONG FOUR CADETS WERE PRODUCED. WHEN THE RIGHT CADETS WERE PRODUCED, THEY CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE SEEN ANYTHING.

\* COL. CARLOS AVILES, WHO REPORTEDLY TOLD AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL LAST DECEMBER THAT COL. BENAVIDES HAD ADMITTED HIS GUILT IN THE CASE, RECENTLY TESTIFIED THAT HE BARELY KNOWS THE AMERICAN. IN FACT, HE WORKED SIDE BY SIDE WITH THAT AMERICAN FOR MONTHS AND SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED HIS ASSIGNMENT TO EL SALVADOR.

\* MANY MEMBERS OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES HAVE ADOPTED A WATERGATE-STYLE APPROACH TO TESTIFYING IN THE CASE, SAYING ESSENTIALLY THAT THEY DO NOT RECALL SEEING, HEARING OR KNOWING ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED ON THE NIGHT OF THE CRIMES.

AND I COULD GO ON AND ON.

AND YET, DESPITE ALL THESE PROBLEMS WITH THE CASE, THE SAD REALITY IS THAT THE JESUITS' CASE PROBABLY REFLECTS THE SALVADORAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM AT ITS BEST -- NOT ITS WORST. THIS IS ONE OF A HANDFUL OF HUMAN RIGHTS CASES OVER THE PAST DECADE THAT HAS RECEIVED ENOUGH INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN EL SALVADOR. THOUSANDS OF OTHER CRIMES -- SOME PERPETRATED BY THE FMLN, OTHERS BY THE MILITARY, AND STILL OTHERS BY UNKNOWN FORCES -- HAVE NOT EVEN BEEN INVESTIGATED. DESPITE PROMISES AND DESPITE TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN US AID --YOUR TAX DOLLARS -- THE SALVADORAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM REMAINS ESSENTIALLY AN OXYMORON -- NEITHER SYSTEMATIC, NOR JUST.

TODAY, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JUSTICE IN EL SALVADOR. AND CLEARLY, THERE IS NEED FOR MASSIVE JUDICIAL REFORM. BUT THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS, MILITARY REFORMS, AGRICULTURAL REFORMS AND SO MANY OTHER REFORMS.

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HOWEVER, EL SALVADOR WILL NOT ADVANCE IN ANY OF THESE AREAS UNTIL BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FMLN GET SERIOUS ABOUT PEACE. AND I HOPE AND PRAY THAT BOTH SIDES WILL RECOMMIT THEMSELVES TO THIS GOAL DURING THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS -- SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED AN AMENDMENT I AUTHORED TO CUT 50% OF THE MILITARY AID TO EL SALVADOR AND TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FMLN TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE WAR. THE SENATE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE UP THIS AMENDMENT ON TUESDAY.

I HOPE THE SENATE DOES THE RIGHT THING ON TUESDAY, BECAUSE FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE TURNED OUR BACKS ON THE HARSH REALITIES THAT EXIST IN EL SALVADOR.

**IF THE JESUITS' CASE IS TO BE RESOLVED, IT WILL REQUIRE CONSTANT AND CONTINUED PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES. IF CORRUPTION IS TO BE ENDED AND MILITARY REFORM IS TO BE ACHIEVED IT WILL REQUIRE CONSTANT AND CONTINUED PRESSURE BY THE UNITED STATES. AND IF PEACE IS TO BECOME A REALITY IN EL SALVADOR, IT WILL REQUIRE A MUCH STRONGER COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES.**

**IT TOOK THE SAVAGE MURDERS OF SIX HOLY MEN TO WAKE US UP. LET'S ACT NOW -- TO DEMAND JUSTICE IN THE JESUITS' CASE AND TO ENCOURAGE AN END TO A WAR THAT HAS KILLED SO MANY. LET'S NOT WAIT FOR ANOTHER GRUESOME ATROCITY TO SLAP US IN THE FACE BEFORE WE FINALLY DO THE RIGHT THING.**