

Statement by Congressman Joe Moakley

The size of yesterday's vote on El Salvador represents a new consensus in the Congress on how future U.S. aid to that country should be handled. The passage of the Moakley-Murtha amendment changes the rules of the game significantly. The days of providing the Salvadoran military with a blank check are over.

I should also add that the defeat of the Broomfield substitute signifies the completely bankrupt nature of any proposal which wants to take us back to the days of presidential certifications every six months as a means to provide uninterrupted military aid.

The breadth of the coalition which supported the Moakley-Murtha substitute demonstrates that Republicans as well as Democrats will no longer accept excuses for brutal acts committed by the Salvadoran armed forces. And while all of us admire and wish to support President Cristiani, the vote clearly underscores that justice must be done in the case of the six Jesuits and two women murdered in San Salvador last November.

I also want to stress that the vote in support of Moakley-Murtha demonstrates the desire on the part of the U.S. Congress to support the negotiations taking place in Caracas, Venezuela and our belief that the only way to achieve peace is to put pressure on both sides to remain at the negotiating table until a political accord can be reached that would let all Salvadorans-- regardless of their political persuasion-- the right to participate freely and safely in the political, social and economic life of their country.

It is not my intention to do anything that would delay consideration of or jeopardize the passage of the much needed aid to Nicaragua and Panama. This is an important bill.

I also hope that the Administration will agree to re-enter into negotiations with the Congress to address the current realities in El Salvador. However, it is my intention to work with Members of the Appropriations Committee over the next few weeks in an effort to translate the meaning of last night's important vote into law.