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Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
1310 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-1602

Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1977-1986

May 18, 1990

Member of Congress
8th District Massachusetts
1953-1986

Dear Colleague:

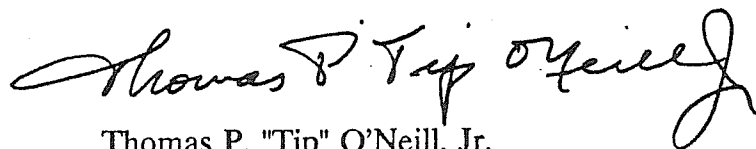
I know you share my outrage at the brutal murder of the six Jesuits and two women which took place in El Salvador over six months ago. For me it was like deja-vu. During the time I was Speaker, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated while saying mass. That was ten years ago. At that time, we were urged by the Reagan Administration to be patient; we needed to give the Salvadoran Government a chance to bring those responsible to justice. Well, as you know, justice has yet to be done in that case. And since then, nuns, priests, unionists, teachers, peasants, students and so many thousands of other innocent people have been killed in a bloody civil war that has raged for far too long.

I think President Cristiani is a good man -- in much the same way I thought President Duarte was a good man. However, it seems clear that the Salvadoran military is the real power in El Salvador and not the civilian government. And I fear that unless the Congress and the Administration are prepared to cut back on the seemingly endless supply of U.S. dollars for military aid, the killing will continue.

My good friends, Joe Moakley and John Murtha, have proposed a sensible plan for encouraging a peaceful settlement to the Salvadoran civil war -- a war that has already claimed over 70,000 lives. Their plan provides strong incentives to both the Salvadoran military and the FMLN to stop the killing and begin good faith negotiations. On the other hand, the Republicans have prepared a substitute that would not provide incentives for either side to change their behavior. That is why I strongly support the Moakley-Murtha proposal -- and I urge you to do the same.

This is the time and this is the type of proposal we can all embrace. Let's do what is necessary to prevent further bloodshed in a country that has already suffered too much.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr.