

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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Andrews Air Force Base
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Statement by Congressman Joe Moakley
Chairman, Speaker's Special Task Force on El Salvador

Shortly after the November 16th murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her young daughter in El Salvador, Speaker Tom Foley appointed an 18 member Democratic Task Force to monitor the Salvadoran government's investigation into that crime -- and to look into other related issues of concern.

Since that time, the investigation into the killings has made important progress -- but questions still remain. The members of this task force will not be satisfied with an investigation that is limited only to the identification of those who actually did the killings. Those who ordered or otherwise consented to the crime must also be brought to justice.

A central question for the task force is whether the human rights problems in El Salvador -- including the Jesuit killings -- are the actions of a few renegade military and political figures operating at the margins of Salvadoran society or whether, in fact, they stem from attitudes and actions that go to the very heart of the armed forces and other major institutions in that country?

Today, 10 members of the Speaker's task force will travel to El Salvador. We will be joined by five Republicans, appointed by Minority Leader Robert Michel, for an intensive four days of meetings with Salvadoran Government officials, U.S. Embassy personnel, religious leaders and many others.

The people of El Salvador clearly want an end to the war and violence which has caused over 70,000 deaths. They also want the truth -- as do the people of the United States. We are hopeful that this trip and the investigation of the task force will produce answers and will contribute to the achievement of peace with democracy in El Salvador.